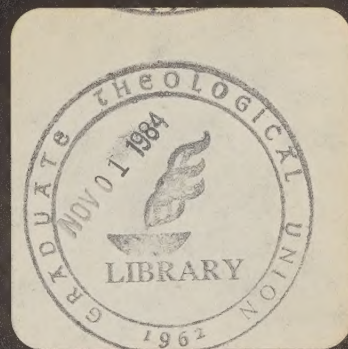
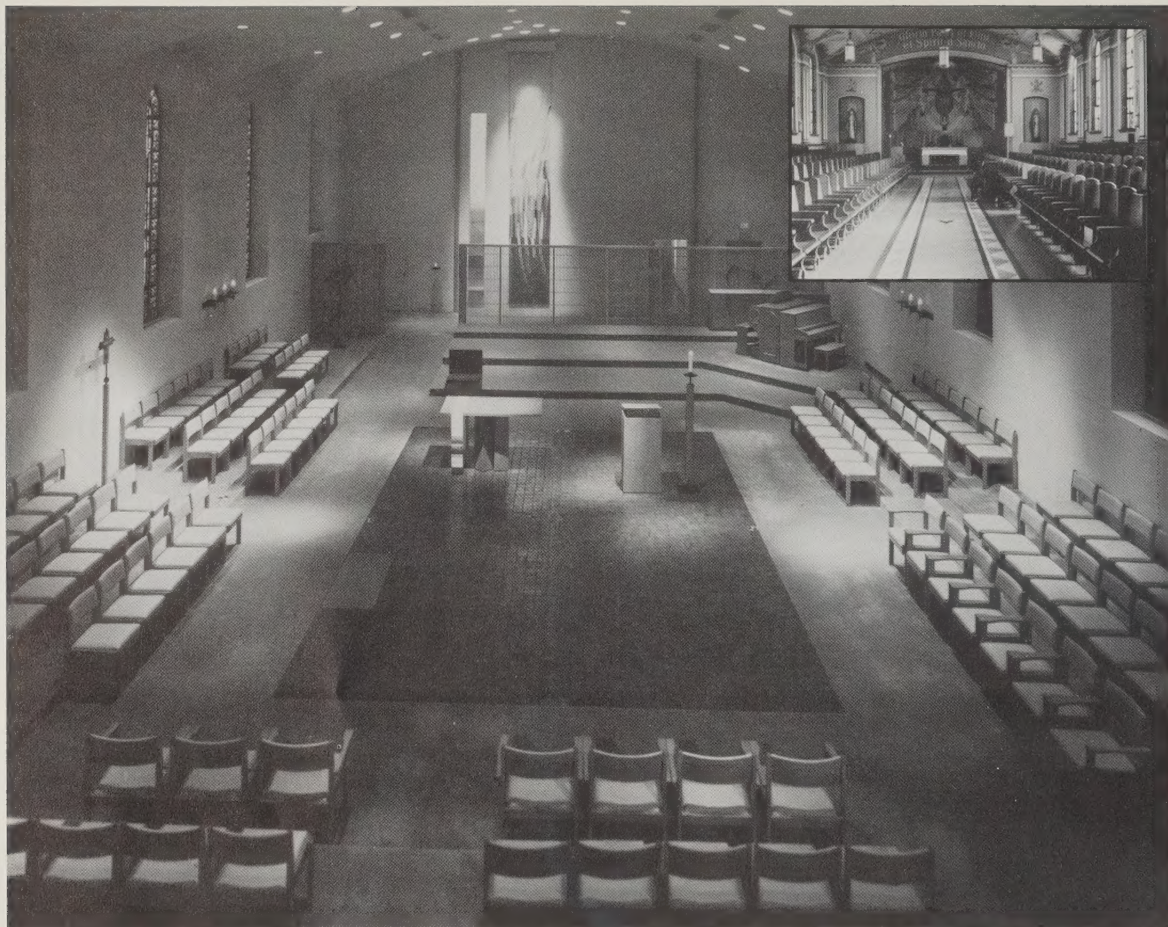


FAITH & FORM



JOURNAL OF THE INTERFAITH FORUM ON RELIGION, ART AND ARCHITECTURE AFFILIATE OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS
Vol. XVIII FALL 1984 ISSN 0014-7001





IBD/Interior Design 1983 Gold Medal and Best of Competition award. Dominican Chapel of the Plains, Great Bend, Kansas.
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Inset: Chapel before renovation.

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The editor is pleased to review manuscripts for possible publication. Any subject material relevant to art and architecture is welcome. Text should be double spaced on 8-1/2 by 11 paper. Manuscripts and photos will not be returned unless specifically requested and a return envelope with sufficient postage is included. Good visual material is emphasized.

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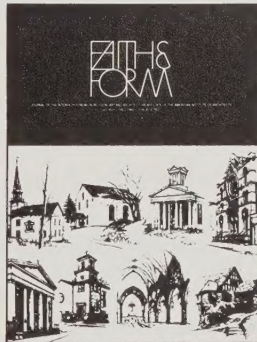
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Drawing: Mark L. Peckham; Designer: Richard Kraham

About the Cover:

The eight churches featured here are recipients of the 1984 Historic Religious Properties Awards, sponsored by the Preservation League of New York State. The awards were presented in recognition of outstanding commitment to the preservation of religious structures of all types. The Preservation League is a statewide, not-for-profit organization dedicated to protecting the vast architectural heritage of New York State.

Recipients, clockwise from upper left-hand corner, are Christ Episcopal Church, Duaneburg; Elmsford Reformed Church, Elmsford; St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Somers; Eldridge Street Synagogue, New York City; Edgehill Church of Spuyten Duyvil, Bronx; Blessed Sacrament Roman Catholic Church, Albany; St. James A.M.E. Zion Church, Ithaca; St. James Roman Catholic Church, New York City;

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Notes & Comments

Liturgical Arts Conference

A Western Conference on Orthodox Liturgical Arts was presented in May by the St. John of Damascus Association of Iconographers, Iconologists and Architects. Liturgical vestments and music of both eastern and western rites were discussed. Icon restoration and the theological basis of painting were emphasized. The conference was held in St. Luke's Church in Garden Grove, Ca.

A New Film

Beyond Utopia, Changing Attitudes in American Architecture, is a new 58-minute film available to architects nationwide. It focuses on the work and theories of American architects considered in the vanguard of Post-Modernism: Peter Eisenman, Frank Gehry, Michael Graves, Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown. Philip Johnson comments on their work and how his own work has changed. Rental \$110, videotape cassette \$650. Elizabeth Rich, 251 West 57th Street, New York, NY 10019.

COPAR

The Cooperative Preservation of Architectural Records is a part of the Library of Congress. It was established to encourage the preservation of graphic and written records of the built environment. There are drawings, renderings, blueprints, photographs, contracts, personal and business correspondence, office records, diaries, change orders, specifications. COPAR also offers guidelines for the formation of local and state groups and publishes a quarterly newsletter. Curator: C. Ford Peatross, Library of Congress, COPAR, Washington, DC 20540. Does your denomination or official headquarters have such a facility to preserve your corporate records?



A New Position

Father John Meyendorff, a long-time faculty member of St. Vladimir's Seminary, has been unanimously appointed by the Board of Trustees as the new dean. He will succeed the much respected and beloved Father Alexander Schmemmann, whose death occurred earlier this year. We send our best wishes to Father Meyendorff.

In Reply

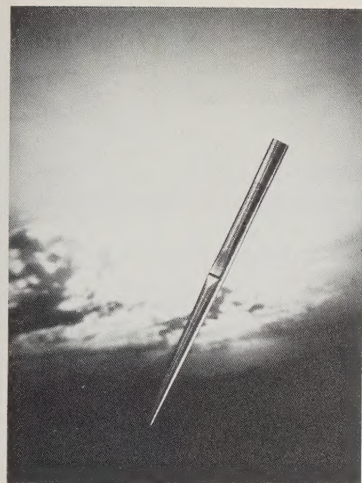
The spring 1984 issue of *Faith & Form* contains some remarks by Tony Atkin, AIA, on "Tradition and Innovation in Contemporary Religious Architecture." He was requested by this magazine to comment on his Gothic form chapel for the Cathedral of Christ the King, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, and also on the recently published book, *Tradition Becomes Innovation* by Bartlett Hayes (Pilgrim Press, 1983). The following is Mr. Hayes' reply:

I find Mr. Atkin's argument well informed. He documents it with several useful illustrations, and it is convincing as to his thesis that the perpetuation of ritual imagery, formed in a given style, is desirable for the spiritual values so conveyed. "I believe innovation can take place within traditional form," he states, but, thereby, he seems to be persuaded of the value of adaptation rather than of true innovation.

Indeed, Part I of my book consists of examples illustrating adaptations in American church building derived from each of several European prototypes. I included them in order to distinguish between adaptation and innovation. Part II then demonstrates how modern styles differ from those of the past just as each of those past styles differ from each other. Over the years, to be different has been innovative. In that succession of differences lies the tradition of cultural and social change.

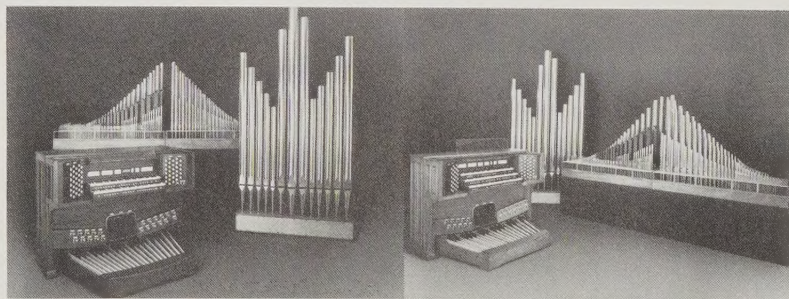
Mr. Atkin asserts that I equate innovation solely with "modern" architecture. On the contrary, I contend that innovation is the essence of every philosophical and accompanying stylistic change during the two thousand years of the history of the Western

Continued on page 6



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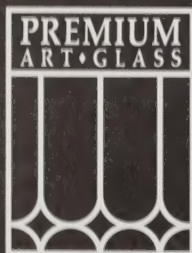
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Notes & Comments Continued from page 4

World. How can that history have altered from Ancient Greece to Byzantium, to Gothic France without innovation? And have those alterations not occurred effectively enough to establish a tradition of social change? Mr. Atkin declares, "Mr. Hayes believes that innovation and tradition are separate and incompatible." We seem to understand the meaning of the terms differently.

However, I doubt that the difference of our understanding is as wide as it may at first seem. My reason for this is the evidence provided by his remarks about the Crystal Cathedral (Johnson-Burgee), Crystal Grove, Calif.: "The building is in the tradition of the great cathedrals in that religious awe is inspired by the expression of advanced structural accomplishment in the incorporation of vast space."

There you have it—a perception I would proudly employ about that same church in my book. It is an awareness of tradition in the sense that I mean it, a liturgical interpretation in modern architectural terms, but it is also innovative reflecting the tenets of today, and both are beautifully compatible!—Bartlett Hayes

Poster Power

Abernethy-Poetzsch, Architects, 341 North Caswell Road, Charlotte, NC 28204, have written our office concerning a form of communication with church groups and building committees that they feel has been immensely successful. They have developed a 24 x 36 poster, which explains "who, what, where, when and how much" for a building program. The posters fold into a 9 x 12 handout and accompany fund raising pledge cards. The reproduction is a diazo process, which is fairly inexpensive for the size and can be printed from the smallest table top printer. The concept has been well received by churches. We appreciate this firm's willingness to share this with us.

A New Study Center in Jerusalem

A five-building complex by Moshe Safdie and Associates will provide a new campus for Hebrew Union College and the World Union for Progressive Judaism. A sequence of outdoor spaces and landscaped roof terraces that step down toward inside courts is intended to evoke a sense of Jerusalem's architectural heritage. The roof of the synagogue will extend 40 feet above the line of the adjacent youth hostel to command views of the Temple Mount and the Old City beyond.

Cover Poster Available

This issue's cover drawing is available in poster form, 23 inches wide by 29, from Preservation League, 307 Hamilton Street, Albany, NY 12210. The artist is Mark L. Peckhan, and the designer is Richard Kraham. The cost is \$3.00, postpaid.

MIMAR: Architecture in Development

This is the name of a new quarterly design magazine covering contemporary work in developing countries. MIMAR or "master builder" reflects the magazine's focus on both technical and conceptual aspects of architecture. The primary editorial objective is to provide critique and commentary on the unification of technique with cultural tradition. Subscription: \$36 for one year. MIT Press, 28 Carleton Street, Cambridge, MA 02142.

An Interfaith Record

Sergey Padukow, A.I.A., of Toms River, N.J., is an architect who has had the opportunity to express his own ecumenical and interfaith belief. He has built seven American Christian Orthodox churches, five Russian Orthodox, seven Baptist, two Byzantine Rite, two Methodist and Presbyterian, two synagogues, two Buddhist temples, one Ukrainian Catholic, and one Islamic mosque, Jehovah's Witness, Seventh Day Adventist, Episcopal, Roman Catholic, and a military chapel.



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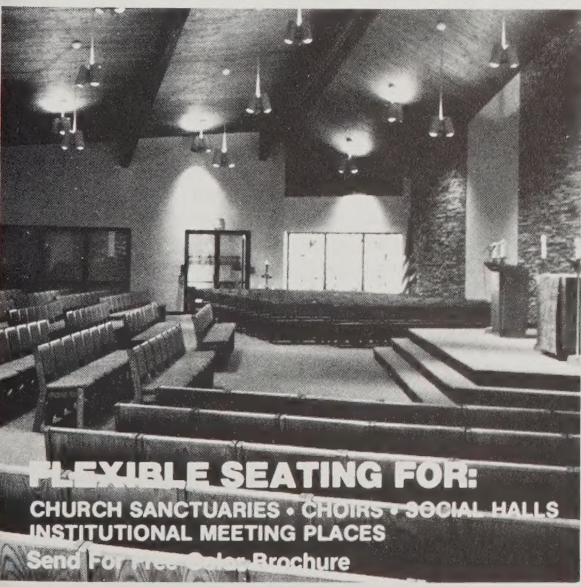
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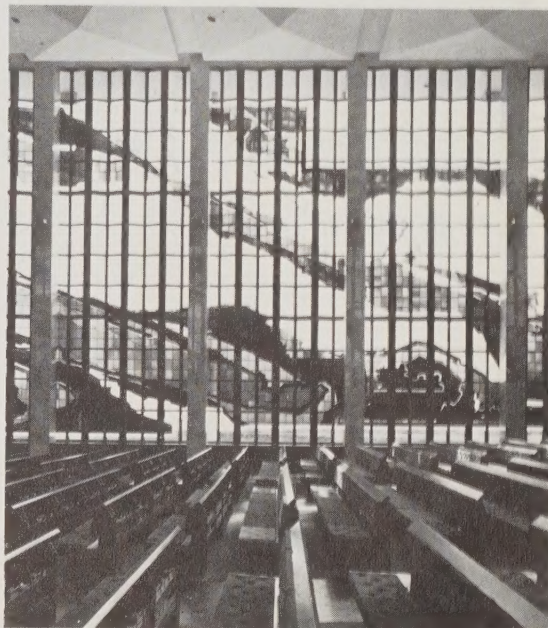
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IS A CHRISTIAN ARCHITECTURE POSSIBLE? A EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE

by Neville Clouten



Fifteen years ago I read in the Swedish journal *Arkitektur* that church architecture "reflects mercilessly the uncertain position of the Christian Church in the Society of today. ... In no other field of modern architecture does there appear to be such uncertainty."

I should think there is little reason for such a condition today. Church architecture ought to provide unique examples of certainty if the Christian message is in fact the most relevant communication to society.

While all buildings will communicate in direct, and sometimes unwanted, ways, it is in church architecture that we should expect to see evidences of a unique working of the creative design process. Whenever a client and an architect begin to work together on an architecture for and about Christians, there are at least seven areas that will need to be considered. Church architecture should uniquely respond to:

1. Environment
2. Culture
3. Human activities
4. Safety

NEVILLE CLOUTEN is chairman of the Department of Architecture at Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Mich. A frequent contributor to architectural journals, his last article, "The Architecture of Kuwait," appeared in the August issue of the AIA journal, *Architecture*.

5. Climate
6. Cost
7. Symbolism

A first concern in the design process is for a *perceptive approach toward the environment*. Designing with Nature will naturally link building and landscape, but the church building should aspire to do more. Where else should we turn for the clearest statement on environmental stewardship? I like the term "gentle architecture" as used by Malcolm Wells to describe concepts published over several years and recently illustrated in his book by that name.

I believe each reader is able to recall an example of a church building set in a garden. One that I have enjoyed is the Pfingstberg Church in Mannheim, Germany. A pedestrian approach leads past the belltower and rises to a place for gathering that is experienced as an "outdoor room." Above the entrance doors one can see the top of the belltower reflected in the softened concrete frame of the building. Even from this outside perspective, the structural ceiling members can be perceived as counterparts to branches and leaf veins of surrounding trees. Considerations of both path and goal are central to the design process, for people on the way to a worship space can be made more receptive to experiences intended to occur within.

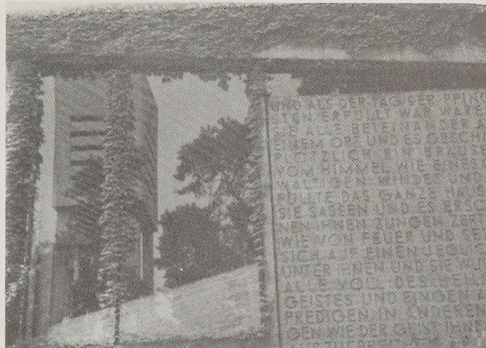
The environment context is just as important in a city as in the natural

setting. Spaces designed for the Christian Church in urban areas ought to lead to buildings that are good neighbors to the surrounding building fabric, just as Christians in the city would subscribe to principles of neighborhood.

In New York City there is an outstanding example of a contemporary church space set apart. The building of the Citicorp project in Manhattan necessitated the replacement of a church building as part of the program. St. Peter's Lutheran Church "holds its own" amidst the high-rise developments. The church is in scale with a gathering space where people can stop, communicate, rest and eat in the out-of-doors. From the street, the passerby can see into a worship space that is otherwise closed from the world for acoustic reasons. The church is in the world, for the world, but preserves its integrity. The change in geometric form sets it apart from the towering rectilinear buildings for banking and commerce.

A second context for the design of church buildings today is *culture*. The geographic and historic reasons for differences in society are at times clearly expressed in the houses of a community. Marriage in some societies is directly associated with the building of a house. Norberg-Schultz says it well. "The house which the lovers jointly produce is their home."

I was interested to find the term "space set apart" used to describe one



Pfingstberg Church, Mannheim, Germany. Mutschler and Bredow, Architects.

of many parts of a house plan drawn by Aldo Van Eyck. We often localize activities in a house, combining these with unique spatial experiences—sitting in the sunroom, relaxing in a darker, lower space, standing in a tall place, dining in a candle-lit alcove. Norberg-Schultz adds, "When a space of love becomes public it takes on the character of sacred space." Perhaps this reference reminds us only of some cultural determinants for indigenous buildings in areas such as Africa and the Pacific. However, in many areas of the world the church may be seen by the users as the living and family rooms of the community.

In Finland, the country house and sauna building continue, through the use of natural materials, to link the past with the present. It is difficult to imagine a better synthesis of a lakeside site, granite boulders, and wooden structure than that provided in the sauna's combination of wood fuel, rock heat sink, and water. It is the sense of place that the Finnish country house and sauna have achieved that challenged the Suomalainen brothers in their design for Kivenlahti Church.

Ten years earlier these architects built their houses of rock and wood on the Espoo peninsula. A rectilinear geometry was used for bedrooms, kitchens, bathrooms, and service areas while a splayed geometry was reserved for the living rooms. During the 1970-80 decade, the town of Kivenlahti developed and, when needed, the church was designed. The plan illustrates the same principle of rectilinear rooms for offices and service areas, with a splayed space set apart for worship and fellowship activities. This approach to design

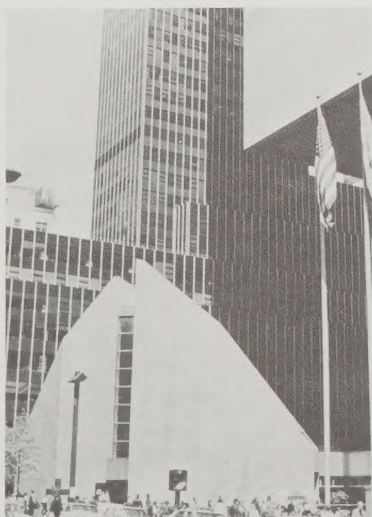
has been developed over six decades by many Finnish architects, particularly the late Alvar Aalto. By a change in geometry, special emphasis has been given to places where people gather. Kivenlahti Church can be seen as an end result of a combination of cultural influences, architectural directions and the Suomalainen's personal design approach, which has remained sensitive to time and place.

On entering the Kivenlahti Church foyer there is an axis to the altar. The aisle symmetry reminds us of Western medieval influences that came to Finland with the introduction of the Lutheran faith. On entering into the worship space, however, there are direct Finnish references—granite rocks stacked without evidence of mortar, the introduction of light "filtered" through wooden struc-

tural members, a predominance given to an assymmetrically placed beam-and-column arrangement, and an overall dark blue color that gives a feeling of solemnity and silence. Here is a timeless, cultural space with a definite sense of place.

The same perceptiveness that we would expect to see in relation to designing with the environment and culture applies to designing *appropriate enclosures for human needs and preferences*. Basically, architecture is to screen human activity from unwanted aspects of the environment, allowing some light and providing a view to the outside. The need for maintaining human scale will temper the design of large places for worship assembly, and surely in no case would architecture for Christians set out to provide forms that could be read as brutal. The Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy, National Conference of Catholic Bishops (1978), referred to the need for a space to have "a 'good feeling' in terms of human scale, hospitality, and graciousness. It does not seek to impress, or even less, to dominate...."

Come with me to Emmanuel's Church in Jönköping, Sweden. Set in an historic area of timber buildings, and as a replacement for an earlier traditional building, the small site precluded the design of a tower or generous entry courtyard. A small octagonal space is placed next to the street and entered beneath a cantilevered portal at the street boundary. From this small courtyard, doors open to a foyer that is church-oriented to the left and secular to the right. By this careful planning the building entry points are protected in winter while the human scale of the open space encourages people to



St. Peter's Lutheran Church, New York City. Hugh Stubbins and Associates, Architects.



Kivenlahti Lutheran Church, Espoo, Finland. Timo and Tuomo Suomalainen, Architects.

gather there in better seasons.

Entering the foyer we first see a table with coffee. There is a natural response to place a few kronor on the bench, take up a cup and pastry, and move to a nearby table. The stranger or non-churchgoer is made to feel comfortable, a consideration that was an important part of the activities program given to architect Carl Nyrén.

The building divides into three levels on the right-hand side, while on the left there is a large well-lit timber space for worship activities. This space is set apart but always available to the users of the building who come for many purposes during the long hours that the building is open each day of the week.

The concern for individual and community needs extends to the aspect of designing for *safety*. Not only should consideration be given to all matters of safety in structural and building design, selection of non-toxic materials and to barrier-free design—the Christian's concern for the individual would extend to every effort being made for health and happiness. In many ways the architect can follow the physician's diagnostic role, perceiving areas of stress and relieving tensions in activity settings. In 1955 Alvar Aalto saw that "the organization is too brutal. It is the task of the architect to give life a gentler structure." Not only, therefore, will buildings provide appropriate enclosures to the activities for which they are designed, but the message conveyed by the Christian church building would be one of caring. Church architecture ought to be unique

as a result of a process of caring about the wholeness of life.

The precinct walls to the Crematorium Chapel at Gävle, Sweden, have always given me a feeling that the details have been uniquely designed as

a part of the whole. Instead of a uniform timber formwork that would provide large grey areas of concrete, the architects Engström, Landberg, Larsson, and Törneman specified varying sizes of softwood interspersed with an occasional plank of hardwood. The wood grain texture to the different widths, strips of light reflected from splayed surfaces here and there, and the contrast of shadow lines from projections all contribute to make the walls full of life. Care has been taken to detail architecturally the enclosure walls of the special part of the forest designated as a gathering place for those attending a funeral service.

To the familiar dictum of Louis Sullivan indicating the form-function relationship, Ralph Erskine has added, "form follows *climate*." With environmental stewardship concerns, the church building is likely to incorporate passive design principles with energy use appropriate to the climate and resource availability of a particular location. Every site location will have secrets of climate and micro-climate just as it holds other individual characteristics.

In planning the All-Nations Church in Michigan, three activity-generated forms were moved around on the site plan in order to create a fourth open area that would be protected from cold winds in winter, and provide sun or shade to assist outdoor social contact in other seasons. An entry to a foyer and administrative area with an internal courtyard leads to a multi-functional square. To this social center is attached a trian-



Emmanuel's Free Church, Jonkoping, Sweden. Carl Nyren, Architect.

gular space to be always available for any type of worship service or meditation. The importance of the exterior gathering place, with sun terraces and seating areas under deciduous trees, has led in planning to what can be perceived as building encroachments. These encroachments are in the form of an amphitheater and alcoves along an undulating wall. While the outdoor activity spaces and main points of entry are located towards southern exposures, the north side of the building is cut into the slope of the site.

A design aspect that will always be of concern is *cost*, for even a church building with a large budget must contend with whatever message is meant to be conveyed in terms of accountability. Church buildings can imply the worth of sharing resources to a community—in addition to illustrating response both philosophically and practically to a funding organization. The accounting concept will normally include cost plans for construction and maintenance appropriate to the community of users. Accountable architecture, as design quality, does not depend on budget provisions.

The low-cost Dernbach Church, Germany, presents a simplicity in plan and section, and the materials are standardized off-the-shelf components. Emphasis in the church design was placed on a luxury of planting. The building is seen from the street through a group of trees in a forecourt, and the path to the worship space is highlighted with a profusion of plants in a small rectilinear courtyard. The Dernbach Church is accountable architecture that has responded well to building cost limitations.

Consideration of the architectural design process includes the aspect of *symbolism*. The history of architecture and art provides a vocabulary of symbolic forms and spaces, and contemporary church spaces will want to respond to the history and traditions of the Christian church by the selection of symbols to convey meaning.

While there is interest in integrating Christian ideas and buildings into all life, the Christian recognizes that time and space historically have been set apart. Several different symbolic concepts can co-exist in one church building. Twenty years ago Aldo Van Eyck was invited to enter a limited competition



Crematorium Chapel, Precinct Wall, Gävle, Sweden. Engstrom, Landberg, Larsson, Torneman, Architects.

for a church building in a park at Driebergen, Holland. The plan of his submission illustrates how the church would comprise four separate places within one building rather than a single center around which to gather. Three spaces were to "circumscribe mildly without asserting their centers" while the fourth was set apart as a more complete circle of permanent concentric tiers. Individu-

als and groups of people could choose to use and experience the interior spaces of the building from a variety of possibilities. The architect's concept diagram emphasized the gathering of people in relation to two positions of focus along "the street" through the church that connected two sections of the path. Both foci, the pulpit and the communion table, were located equidistant from the vacant physical center of the building as it is defined geometrically by the intersection of diagonals. The proposed roof for the church incorporated four circular skylights. In poetic language the architect described these as "large binoculars pointing in different directions. They will bring the sky inside the church as well as the clouds, the green of the tree tops, the songs of the birds, and the sun."

Symbolism in design is uniquely important to church architecture. A symbolically appropriate space can reinforce the message of the worship service. There is then the opportunity to combine the message with our own experiences, which add a still different dimension.

As distinct from a "consumer type mentality" towards a worship space of a frame of mind similar to buying a ticket for a performance, the church first worships by offering mind and heart to the Creator God. With what the mind and heart receives, the church then ministers to the world in mission and ser-



All Nations Seventh-Day Adventist Church, Berrien Springs, Mich. Neville Clouten and Alan Bell, Architects.



Parish Evangelical Church, Dernbach, Germany. Hans Heydorn, Architect.

ness of symbolism available to church architecture there are simultaneous opportunities for design for all levels

From the richness of data available, the design of contemporary church spaces provides great challenge to perceptive clients, architects and all who choose to become involved

Church architecture will communicate more as we give the process more to communicate

"Man dwells when he can orientate himself within and identify himself with an environment. In short, when he experiences the environment as meaningful." (Norberg-Shultz)

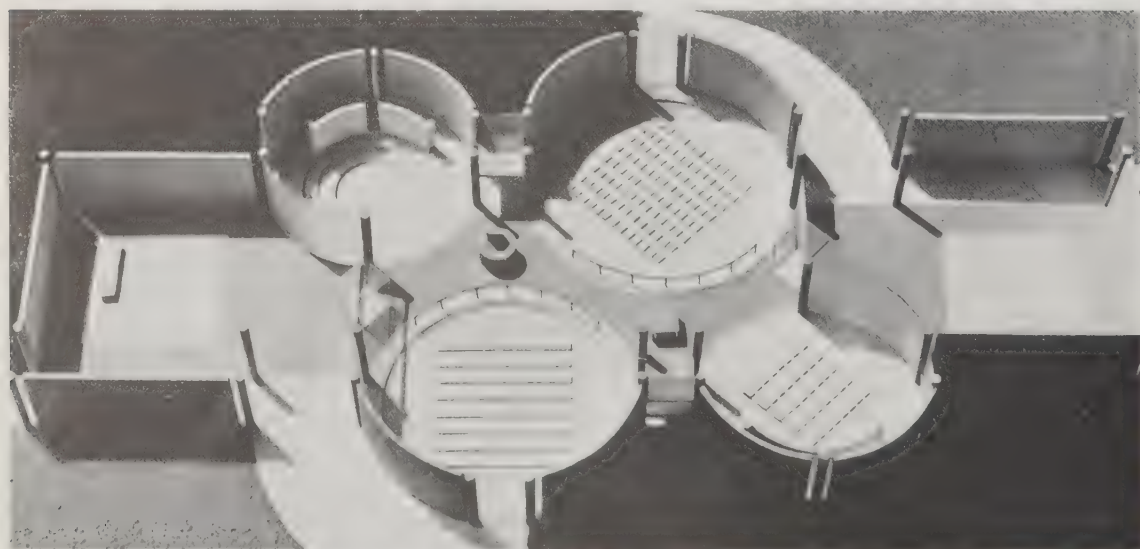
"Architecture can do no more, and must not do less, than assist one's homecoming." (Aldo Van Eyck)

vice, and to itself in nurture and caring. The offering of a gift is central to worship, and we know there is a difference in making a gift or buying it

On these assumptions, a worship space will be "screened" to assist creative people in making their gift to the Creator with the fullest use of aesthetic experiences and symbols appropriate to worship

The consideration of what lies beyond the functionalism of modern architecture generates interest in communicating architectural ideas at more than one

level. The design of a simple contemporary building may set out to incorporate three levels of meaning to different groups of users—first, a feeling of appropriateness to the man in the street who is comfortable in the presence of the building without thinking why; second, the informed person who verbalizes the inside story of the client's program and the building's message; third, a specialist in jargon who speaks and writes in esoteric terms. Oftimes we need to have the writings of Chomsky nearby in order to decode the third level. With the rich-



'Kerk en Wereld' Competition, Driebergen, Netherlands. Aldo van Eyck, Architect.

THE LANDMARKING OF RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS: A PLEA FOR VISION WITH WIDER CONTEXTS

by John Dillenberger



I. The Setting

Before addressing the issues that have arisen in the landmarking of religious institutions, it is appropriate to comment on the origin of this account. The materials were prepared for the Architectural Design Advisory Panel of the Office of Church Building of the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries, whose members, in addition to myself, are Hubert S. Beckwith, Thomas Green, Bartlett Hayes, Betty H. Meyer, with John R. Potts, executive head of the Office as its chair. The task of the panel has been to encourage better design in new church buildings through consultations, including on-site visits; through evaluating plans and architects; and through recommending grants on the basis of requests in which the procedures and directions show creative promise. Although strictly advisory to the executive head of the Office of Church Building, the group has worked well together and in a number of instances, we have been able to induce processes that led to better buildings than would have been the case without our work.

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Over a year ago, it became apparent to the panel that while it was encouraging new designs, distinctive older designs were increasingly the subject of landmarking controversies. In the context of that discussion, the present writer took on the task of drafting a report that would pose the issues and provide some case histories. An earlier draft was discussed by the panel, and this second, already revised draft reflects that discussion, as well as comments from others with whom I consulted and who read the original draft. The current draft will be on the agenda of the next meeting of the panel, and specific recommendations on a possible course of action may be made to the Office of Church Building.

Inasmuch as the issues and cases need a wider context of discussion, John R. Potts and I decided that we would gladly accept Betty Meyer's invitation to publish the materials in *Faith & Form*.

II. Posing the Issues

Across the nation, the basic issue is how to save buildings worthy of landmark status, without penalty, when they are owned by private, nonprofit institutions. Commercial interests that own such buildings do not suffer the difficulties of the private sector; they are eligible for tax write-offs when landmark status exists. Indeed, they have frequently encouraged landmark status because of the benefits. Moreover, in instances of hardship (a category that allows compromise or out-

right demolition), commercial interests have been more adept than the private sector in pursuing their objectives. Nonprofit institutions, such as churches and synagogues, are less prone to pursue the hardship route, both because they do not have the legal and financial resources and because, not having traditional profit and loss figures, they do not know how to proceed. Indeed, the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission has wondered why churches and synagogues do not pursue this justifiable route, and they are willing to help them work through the process.

It is sometimes said that since private, nonprofit institutions do not pay taxes, no penalty exists in their exclusion from some of the benefits available to financial interests. But nonprofit institutions are given their status precisely because they serve society without profit. Moreover, they are not able to turn a financial liability into an asset, as the laws frequently permit in the encouragement of business development.

There are, of course, many instances in which nonprofit groups have taken the initiative in securing landmark status and have become eligible for public and private funds to restore or maintain buildings. Moreover, landmark status is a plus in securing additional funding for both building and program promotion.

The obverse side is that landmark designation can be a liability, since it becomes difficult, if not impossible, to sell,

remodel, or maintain buildings that no longer serve the institution in the community. Such buildings require extra funds that need to come from new sources. Special grants from foundations or individuals, or government funds, always low and now mainly non-existent, have helped small churches in which modest funds were needed. In most instances, nothing less than tax or public dollars are needed to solve the problem. Indeed, if buildings deserve landmark status, it should follow, it seems to me, that community funds are in order, since the community is enriched by the preservation.

In the absence of such funds, churches should take the hardship route. Ironically, when such approaches go to the final stage, namely the right to demolish, the very preservation process is denied.

Criteria need to be developed for determining funds needed in hardship cases. Such criteria will have to be different than loss or gain categories appropriate to commercial ventures. In the current situation, religious institutions are tempted to claim the value of their buildings at top square foot figures of actual or potential real estate values, sometimes prior to new zoning rules that limit development and lower value. When they do this, they are using traditional real estate values in determining the penalty landmark status inflicts. Criteria will need to be financially helpful, but not at the level of unencumbered real estate values.

The use of tax or public funds would have an additional salutary effect. Not only would it take the total burden off nonprofit institutions, it would also reduce the number of nonprofit buildings given landmark status, since financial responsibilities would be involved. In preservation circles and landmark commissions, such a suggestion is rank heresy. So many distinguished buildings have disappeared that for preservationists, the aim is to try to preserve all buildings that meet developed criteria for landmarking. My own judgment, and that of many architects I know, is that a good number of buildings are being landmarked which are of marginal historic or architectural value. There is a feeling among some preservationists that, while architects need to be included in the landmarking process, they are frequently the enemy, for they would rather build

than preserve, and frequently they know little about our architectural heritage.

There are those in the church who believe that landmarking is sometimes the result of community pressure, that it is more interested in preventing new and extensive building than in preserving the old. My investigations lead me to say that, while community pressure sometimes alerts landmarking commissions to noteworthy buildings that are threatened by development proposals, the landmarking decisions themselves are independent of such pressures. Indeed, the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (as many others in the nation), in principle, considers only the noteworthy nature of a building, leaving financial and zoning issues aside. That is why hardship claims should be considered only after landmark status has been determined. Obviously, political pressures are not thereby eliminated, but one is impressed more by the freedom of landmarking commissions from political pressures than by their succumbing to them.

Suppose that landmark status is merited and a church or synagogue wins a hardship claim. What then happens? In New York City, two possibilities are explored—an alternative use or city purchase through the exercise of eminent domain powers. If these fail, or funds cannot be found to make the situation viable, a permit allowing demolition must



St. James Roman Catholic Church, New York City

Photo courtesy of Preservation League of New York State

be issued. Representatives of church and synagogue contend that the alternatives prior to demolition—alternate use or city purchase—could preclude continuation of their mission in that location. Moreover, they contend that such preemptive measures interfere with the free exercise of religion, and violate the separation of church and state. The counsel for the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission states that such alternatives would not occur without the concurrence of the church or synagogue; but I am not clear whether that is a personal or legal option.

In New York City, this issue is one, though only one, of the reasons for opposition to landmarking as such. The Interfaith Commission to Study the Landmarking of Religious Property, the group mainly responsible for the introduction of bills in the New York State legislature to exempt churches and synagogues from landmark designation, believes that landmarking frequently is so detrimental to the mission that it violates the separation of church and state. The funding of religious institutions is, according to a statement by The Council of Churches of the City of New York, New York Board of Rabbis, New York State Catholic Conference, New York State Council of Churches, and Queens Federation of Churches, to "meet human and spiritual needs," not to require them "to become caretakers of bricks and mortar." Thus, it is obvious that the range of opinion ex-



Washington Square United Methodist Church, Greenwich Village

Photo courtesy of Preservation League of New York State

tends from the narrow definition that an undesired alternative use or city purchase violates the separation of church and state, to the broad contention that landmark status as such is an unlawful interference in the life of church or synagogue.

The broad statement that sharply sets "human and spiritual needs" against "caretakers of bricks and mortar" may be said to be a limited theology, exactly what the definition of heresy once meant.

In the past, and in the present, churches and synagogues have been the creators and sometimes custodians of works of beauty, which, too, have served the human spirit. Since some of those who advocate exemptions from landmark laws believe that the church was wrong in the past in building cathedrals and putting financial resources into works of art, one can only say that such a theological understanding is not shared by all, although it may be more prominent at this juncture of history than in the past or probably in the future. The strong national push to limit federal resources in relation to the poor and not so poor, with the request that private institutions move into the gap, makes that theology understandable. Exasperation and urgency together are forging perspectives too limited in nature. It is ironic that religious bodies, which claim they exist to serve the communities and to be responsive to their wishes, often confront communities that encourage landmark status. Even the poor seem to prize beauty more than the affluent who try to help the poor.

Surely, church and synagogue buildings form part of the visible fabric of a community. Hence, it seems theologically dubious that one would want to be exempt from the concerns of the community in order to solve the problem of being hemmed in by its concerns. Bad situations demand wider solutions, not bad laws that exempt institutions from the problems.

It is clear in New York City that current perceptions diverge rather than converge, that passions are high, and that conversations are virtually at a standstill. Many of the leaders of church and synagogue see no point in further explorations, while some preservation groups and the Landmarks Commission are mystified that church and synagogue leaders do not want to join in finding so-

lutions. Hence, public statements vary, with facts more on the side of the Landmarks Commission than the Interfaith Commission.

Hence, the two sides see the same issues differently. The Interfaith Commission states that landmarks designation is imposed forty-two times more for religious institutions than for other buildings. The Landmarks Commission replies that there are over fifteen thousand landmark buildings in New York City, with less than two hundred being churches and synagogues. Moreover, the Landmarks Commission contends that it has had only nine hardship requests from churches and that solutions have been found in all instances. Among the churches, the claim is that no *functioning* church has appealed hardship to the Landmarks Commission and that the landmarks guidelines are relevant only

for churches that are open to being sold and to adaptive uses. The religious groups doubt that any solutions under current laws and guidelines will be just or viable. The Landmarks Commission believes that when its procedures are followed, just solutions will prevail. Within the terms with which the Commission works, that may be true. One gathers the clear impression that no matter what happens in Albany to the proposed law exempting religious institutions from landmark status, the issue will be fought out in the courts, with religious institutions taking the initiative. Variations do exist from city to city, whether Atlanta, Chicago, Detroit, San Francisco or Seattle. But the fundamental issue is the same: the conviction on the part of some in religious institutions that landmark designation penalizes them, and on the part of preservation groups and land-



St. Boniface Roman Catholic Church, San Francisco

Photo courtesy of Mary Lou Lucey, Liturgical Consultant

mark officials, that redress is at hand as buildings are being saved

It is clear, I think, that churches that have moderate and larger size structures suffer most from landmark status, if they wish to remain in the same location. Their needed flexibility, indeed their survival as a religious institution, is at stake. The funds needed to preserve and adapt landmark buildings are greater than current government or private sources provide. They deserve support. If they do not get it, they will challenge the very foundations of landmarking in the courts as an infringement on their mission.

Only a fresh vision that issues in new laws and different procedures will break the impasse and current contentiousness. There are no perfect solutions, but more viable ones can be found. In most situations, new approaches involving only slight changes in law would clear the air of current difficulties that appear headed for the courts.

Let me suggest some procedures that would alleviate the situation:

1. Private institutions that receive landmark status will need to have financial support from private, public, and government sources, if they are not to be unduly penalized for such status.
2. Determination of landmark and financial obligations will need to involve wider constituencies from the beginning. Architects, planners, community leaders, city officials, representatives of religious institutions all need to be involved at the start. If ways of making landmarking financially viable for nonprofit institutions exist, there will be no need to separate landmarking from the financial factors. The result would be a wider input of information and judgment, and the process would be appreciably shortened

On August 1, 1984, the New York County Supreme Court dismissed without prejudice the contention of the Church of St. Paul and St. Andrew that the New York City Landmarks Law was applied unconstitutionally. While the parties seemed to agree that a form of financial hardship exists, the court held that administrative procedures for seeking relief had not been followed and that consequently, the issue of the applicability of the Landmarks Law was not legally "ripe" for consideration until it had become clear that the interests of the Church and the public could not be accommodated. At the

moment of writing, it is not known to me whether the church will follow the procedures for relief or appeal to a higher court.

III. Cases

Landmarking consists of concrete cases, i.e., particular buildings. There is a difference of opinion about the facts and how they are to be interpreted. Sometimes the same course of events is interpreted by one side as an indication that the system does not work and by the other, as an indication of how remarkably well it does work. It is clear that many religious bodies, impatient with the system, are trying to bypass it. It is also clear that many landmarking groups see no need for change. I have summarized several cases in order to provide a picture of the differing perspectives, including my own

A. Adaptive Use—Former Churches or Synagogues Taken Over for Other Purposes

1. *The Church of the Holy Communion*, Avenue of the Americas at 20th, New York City.

This former Episcopal church sold its property to Odyssey House, a drug rehabilitation center, which in turn, after exploring other church uses, sold it to a group interested in creating a night club, the Limelight. The stained glass and much of the interior liturgical ambience, including a stone altar, is still extant. The Episcopal diocese gives the impression that they were denied the objects, while the Landmarks Commission states they were never requested. The owners of the nightclub say that the church virtually abandoned the building, leaving pews, plaques, etc., and that the Bishop never accepted their invitation to actually see what he had criticized. The issue seems more emotional than rational. This former church, now only an architectural building considered worthy of saving, serves as a night club. Had it continued with a mission similar to Odyssey House, the church would probably not have been upset

2. *Greenwich Village Presbyterian Site*, 13th Street West of the Avenue of the Americas, New York City.

Only the facade of this Greek Revival former church remains, apartments having been built behind the facade but in integral relation to it. One can ask: Why

bother to maintain the identity of the church? Two positive points can be made: (1) The excellent Greek Revival facade is preserved. (2) The sight line of the street has been maintained and visually the whole is satisfying. The apartments have made good use of the total space, and one enters them from a side entrance walk, tastefully designed

B. A Hardship Case

1. *Mt. Neboh Synagogue*, 130 W. 79th Street, New York City.

Denied landmark status in the 1960s, according to the Interreligious Commission (but according to the Landmarks Commission, no such record has been found), the building was sold to a Korean Seventh Day Adventist Church. In turn, it landed in the hands of a developer in the 1980s who planned to erect a high-rise building. The community, not wanting this to happen, encouraged landmark status, and rabbis and synagogue councils joined in making a case for landmark status. The Landmarks Commission granted the designation. The developer, however, pleaded hardship and won the right to demolish the building. The Interreligious Commission states that the building is still not demolished because of landmarking entanglements, while the Landmarks Commission states that it is because of disagreements among those who want to develop the site. In fact, there has been no legal obstacle to demolition for many months.

C. Restorations—Working with Landmark and Other Agencies

1. *St. James Church* in lower Manhattan.

The Interfaith Commission maintains that this church was found to be structurally so defective that the City Department of Buildings ordered the immediate eviction of all occupants in nearby buildings because the church was in danger of collapsing. They wanted immediate demolition of the church, but the Landmarks Commission states that the Department of Buildings wanted the defects repaired. The Archdiocese wanted to tear down the building, but the congregation opposed it, and the Archdiocese reconsidered. Considerable money has been raised cooperatively by the church and preservation groups for restoration. (Photo p. 14)

2. *Washington Square United Methodist Church* in Greenwich Village. (Photo p. 14)

This church is engaged in a major res-

toration project, with funds in part from the National Park Service. While the church is dedicated to supporting causes, mainly liberation issues, it also provides space for avant garde theater and the arts. The church leadership decided that it needed a spatial presence of quality. Hence, the restoration interests. Here is a case in which social and aesthetic concerns are nicely wedded.

3. *First Congregational Church, Atlanta, Georgia.*

Near the central business district in an area of high real estate values, this black, historic church is embarked on a major restoration project, involving state, city, public, and private funds. It will cost approximately one million dollars to restore this Beaux-Arts Classical Revival style building. This is a case in which historic associations are mutually prized.

4. *St. Boniface, 133 Golden Gate Avenue, San Francisco.*

This Romanesque Revival building in the Tenderloin district of San Francisco recently has been restored. It is an instance of dedication and love of beauty on the part of a few individuals who sought the funds and saw to it that its original beauty was restored after previous remodeling. (Photo p. 15)

D. Transformations

1. *Roman Catholic Church in Brooklyn.*

Space was needed for a Roman Catholic Hispanic all-purpose church. The actual request was for an auditorium, with altar at one end and the whole built over a parking lot. In this historic district, the Landmarks Commission requested that the parking lot be disguised and that the building blend in with the brownstone neighbors. Religious groups contend that the attempt was to make the front look like the brownstone houses and that



Grace Church School, Episcopal, New York City

Photo courtesy of New York Landmarks Conservancy

the extra cost of \$50,000 could not be afforded. Some landmark individuals wonder why the cost is that high. The two sets of plans—the church's original proposal and the required one—show a major contrast, the latter being a distinct improvement over an original unaesthetic plan.

2. *Grace Church School, Episcopal, 4th Avenue, Manhattan.*

This is another case of differing perceptions. The Interreligious Commission contends that the Landmarks Commission rejected a new building to house the community center and a gymnasium, requiring that the facade of the clergy house be retained. The Commission scheduled hearings because of public concern, and decided not to designate the buildings while demolition plans were underway. The church accepted a

plan based on a re-use study done by the Conservancy, in which the facades were retained. The buildings were then given landmark status. There is a difference of opinion as to whether or not the results met the needs of the church, and whether cooperation or a feeling of coercion was most operative.

3. *Holy Ghost Catholic Church, 1999 Broadway, Denver, Colorado.*

With a history of representing Roman Catholics in central Denver, Holy Ghost Catholic Church found itself with a Renaissance-style, Tiffany glass-studded building of some distinction, but with financial problems. Rejecting selling the building and tearing it down for a high rise, the church instead accepted a purchase of the building and its grounds for \$11 million dollars, with a lease back of \$1 a year for five hundred years, with an

Photo courtesy of The Municipal Art Society, New York City



Roman Catholic Church, Brooklyn, original plan. (Church is small structure at right—proposed addition to Cursillos Center.)

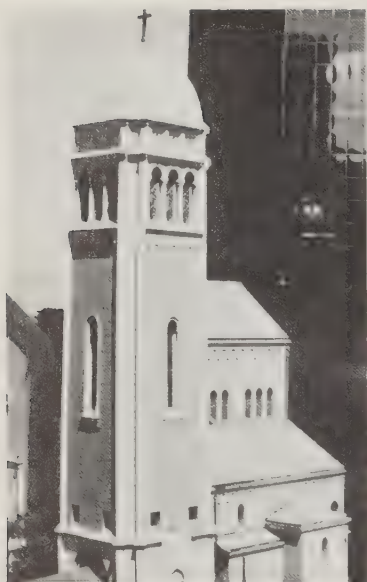


Photo courtesy of Salvan Associates

Holy Ghost Roman Catholic Church, Denver

option to renew for another five hundred. The developer thus saved the building—which should have been saved—permitting restoration and improvements, as well as providing money to continue the mission of the church, including major food and clinic programs. The developer built a 43-story high rise behind the church. The contrast between the two is arresting, if not startling. On one side, the space is open, and the church does not seem close to the high rise; on the other, the high rise partially wraps around a part of the side of the church. Although the building is on stilts, with open space underneath, it does seem to encroach on the church. Undoubtedly, economic factors made it necessary to do this, but one keeps thinking how open the whole might have been, as indeed, it is on the other side of the building.

E. Three Complicated, Unresolved Cases

1. First Congregational Church, Post and Mason, San Francisco

A brief review of the current situation of First Congregational Church in San Francisco indicates that difficult cases are also susceptible to creative approaches. Situated behind the Saint Francis Hotel just off Union Square, First Congregational is a neo-classic building, with an interesting columnar facade and a large interior space with partial glass ceiling. The building, while structurally

sound, is in need of major renovation.

The congregation is aging, and Sunday attendance is less than two hundred. By and large, the prevailing sentiment is to find a way for the church to continue in its present location or within two or three blocks. Financially, the future is not bright, unless there is a new infusion of people and/or resources. Since 1979, the building has been listed by the Heritage Foundation as worthy of landmark status, though the city agreed officially only several months ago. Currently, the designation is in abeyance, pending completion of a study. Moreover, an effort is being made to secure a less restrictive designation.

Concern for the mission of this downtown church on the part of the pastor, its leaders, and the Northern California Conference of the United Church of Christ led to conversations with John Potts of their National Office of Church Building. The result was a joint venture in funding among the church, the conference, and the Board for Homeland Ministries in New York City. Just as a study was to begin with a major workshop, San Francisco's proposed new Downtown Plan was published, which, if implemented, will have greater implications for the church than landmark status. Even if the building could be demolished—which technically would be possible even in the landmark category—a new high rise, looked on by many as a financial answer, would not be possible in that location. Air rights could be sold for another location, but the amount would be closer to a million and a half than to the several million anticipated before landmarking or high-rise restrictions.

Given the new limitations, the conclusion was that the study, contracted with Robert Marquis Associates, should proceed, since the first major issue was determining what the alternatives could be in a newly restricted setting. That study, now complete, lists six major alternatives, with various combination possibilities among them. The conclusion is that remodeling possibilities exist in relation to the Saint Francis Hotel or another interested body, which would provide church space and some financial reward. But the amount of money available would be a fraction of the original hoped-for amount. Currently, the Church is working with an attorney seeking solutions that will satisfy both city and

church. But so far, the attitude of the staff members in developing the Downtown Plan has not been encouraging. Any viable plan would require some technical concessions that the architects (Marquis Associates) and the church do not consider outside the spirit of the Downtown Plan. Considerable opposition has developed to facets of the Downtown Plan among other groups and at the moment of writing (mid-July), predictions of outcome are not possible. Currently, the church is vigorously exploring sharing the sanctuary, with necessary chancel remodeling with a major stage company.

While the situation in First Church was somewhat tense originally, trust developed as the conversations went on. Whether or not the church deserves landmark status is probably precluded as an issue. Architects are divided about that, and the Heritage Foundation does not trust architects as such on landmark issues. The church has begun to accept the fact that no financial panacea exists because of its real estate, and that its mission may also be an important issue in its future. All in all, the process has given hope even as previously thought possibilities have been altered repeatedly.

2. Church of St. Paul and St. Andrew, 86th and West End Avenue, New York City.

This Methodist church was restored by the congregation in 1967, but the exterior facade has deteriorated rapidly since then. The church sought, through a developer, to build a high rise and use the first floor for its own use. Negative neighborhood pressure became an issue and in 1981, the Landmarks Commission, in the light of its own evaluation of the building, gave it landmark status, calling the building an excellent example of "Scientific Eclecticism." Though this may be an accurate term in the history of architecture, the use of the title has provided a field day for popular criticism of the landmark designation.

A neighborhood group drafted plans for the transformation of the building for adaptive use, including two theatres and a small chapel for the continued use of the congregation, apparently with little or no consultation with the congregation.

The Landmarks Commission maintains that it deliberately did not give landmark status to the rectory, thereby trying to signal that it was open to some proposed plans for the church. In Albany,

Joseph Wasserman, an architect and some-time developer, testified that he had talked with the church and the head of the Landmarks Commission about a plan that would have saved the facade, given facilities to the church, and created apartments, but that the conversations stopped. The church contends that it had several options before it, of which Wasserman's was only one. Fundamentally, however, the church has decided, with the help of the national church, to seek relief, not through hardship, but by seeking to overturn the Landmarks Commission mandates, which it considers a violation of equal access under the law. In pleading hardship, one option would be for the city to take over the building, thus precluding a church mission in that place. This the church considers a fundamental violation of the separation of church and state and government interference with the mission of the church. Hence, it is suing the city and has no interest in trying to work out a compromise with the Landmarks Commission, which, in turn, states that it would like to help in trying to find a solution.

3. *St. Bartholomew's Church*, 50th and Park Avenue, New York City.

Having landmark status, the church petitioned the Landmarks Commission to approve a plan that would save the facade of the parish house but build a fifty-nine story high rise over it, which at one point would come within thirteen feet of the dome of the church. The request was denied in June.

The contention of the church is that the parish faces bankruptcy in the future, unless it can turn some of its real estate to profit. Moreover, the proposed real estate venture would permit a mission to the poor, including Harlem, since fifty percent of the new funds could be used outside the immediate parish concerns. Financially, the church would gain over nine million dollars a year for ten years, with probably more after that date. The congregation approved the plans by a majority vote, the closeness of the vote apparently being caused by the legality of letting everyone vote who could claim some connection with the church even though they had not been active in ten years.

Church authorities were upset that a local community board opposed the plan before a proposal was considered by the church, and that city councilmen de-



Church of St. Paul and St. Andrew, Methodist, New York City

Photo by Andrew S. Dollant, Municipal Art Society © 1978

nounced the plan in the press. Technically, the church is right, though it is hardly surprising that the thought of a high rise in connection with the church would provoke opposition.

For all its past wealth, the present leaders of St. Bartholomew's Church believe that the church cannot indefinitely continue even as a self-contained church in its present place and program without new funds. It could reduce its mission and survive for some time. One hears considerable talk about the high ministerial salaries and the expenses of the apartment house for the rector. A quick financial calculation indicates, however, that reductions in salaries—even if that were possible or desirable—would be so minimal in the total budget that it would not affect the basic fundamental situation.

More fundamental is the question as to whether or not the financial situation is as foreboding as the leaders of the church say it is. The financial analysis of the Committee of Parishioners who want to save the church as it is, paints a different financial picture. But in balance, it seems to me that St. Bartholomew's has a case for some form of assistance.

Before proposing the plan just turned down by the Landmarks Commission, St. Bartholomew's explored the feasibility of a financial campaign, including contributions from its corporate neighbors. The

exploration was not encouraging. Others contend that funds could have been found and that some funds were offered to the church. In any case, the old wealth of Park Avenue, which created and sustained St. Bartholomew's, is gone. The rector stated in the spring that even today the church would take seriously a viable funding effort that was substantial and sure of success in lieu of building the high rise.

The current leaders of St. Bartholomew's look upon the current real estate value as a providential gift, for which it has responsibilities, not to serve itself but to serve others. It sees buildings as instruments, not ends, but intends to honor the past, for the new building does not directly affect the church.

The church further reminds us that when the landmarks law came into being in the 1960s, the church initially wanted to challenge the designation but it agreed to the designation with the commission stating, "that in the future, the Church may consider it necessary to alter or expand the existing structures or erect additional structures on the landmark site." Apparently, this was the stock phrase in several early landmark designations, indicating to some that it meant no more or less than a willingness on the part of the Landmarks Commission to consider such possibilities. But the phraseology does seem to stress what

the church considers necessary, thereby raising questions of meaning and potential court interpretations

The proposed tower, it was claimed, would not block sunlight not already blocked by other buildings, and it would keep the same amount of open ground space. It would only utilize air space above what are already existing structures in a way that would not appreciably affect the air and light. The architectural "pros" and "cons" create other issues, not directly relevant to this report. Given the rows of office buildings, one sees the two sides of the argument—if everyone else has done it, from Helmsley Hotel to the Museum of Modern Art, why not St. Bartholomew's, which more than its neighbors, is trying to keep open space? The other side of the argument is that the area is so built up, no further encroachment should occur. But if so, should there not be financial assistance, provided hardship criteria are met, rather than permission to build in the light of hard-

ship? The Landmarks Commission is right; the building should not be erected. If hardship should be proved, demolition of the building would be a poor answer.

In the light of the "no" from the Landmarks Commission, St. Bartholomew's has several possibilities. As Paul Goldberger has pointed out in the *New York Times*, the church and developer, first, "could revise the design and make a new submission to the landmark panel." But, second, they could also, as he states, take the hardship route. This would involve public and extensive financial explorations into the financial hardship question. Third, Goldberger indicates that the church could take the court route, either in a "state court, where it would be expected to argue that the decision represents an improper or arbitrary exercise of governmental power, or in Federal Court, where it would argue the case on Constitutional grounds." This past spring, the rector stated that if the Landmarks Commission says "no" to this

proposal, St. Bartholomew's plans to go to court, pleading that the landmark law adversely penalizes its religious mission.

There has been some talk about a special bill that would make it possible to transfer the air rights of St. Bartholomew's to another location, a practice followed in some cities. The church believes that this would devalue its assets, for they would be worth less in another location, and it points out that in some cities, such as Paris, the high rises nearby would have to pay the church in order to build so high near its property.

IV. A Concluding Observation

Churches and synagogues are publicly heard from too often when concrete issues already have become polarized. This is too late. Their most effective work could be done in forging perspectives that make it possible to create new patterns before polarization has occurred. Vision in regard to new perspectives seems to me to be called for on the issues surrounding the landmarking of religious institutions.

To date, churches and synagogues either have been conspicuously silent, or they have, as in New York City, orchestrated opposition to the landmarking of religious institutions (except when the institutions themselves desire such a designation). Churches and synagogues need to emphasize the religious basis for the preservation of historic religious structures, and they need to fight to win financial assistance for situations in which the mission of church and synagogue is jeopardized by landmark status. Such a double faceted approach may create a new climate and the possibility of working with other agencies to effect whatever changes may be necessary in legal and procedural ways.

Editor's Note: On August 7, the New York State Supreme Court granted the Landmark Preservation Commission's motion for summary judgment in the case of Church of St. Paul and St. Andrew vs. Barwick. The judge dismissed the church's claim that designation violated First Amendment rights. The church can pursue relief through LPC hardship procedure or appeal the decision.

In late August, the City of San Francisco named St. Boniface a landmark of their city. It also has been nominated to the National Register of Historic Places.

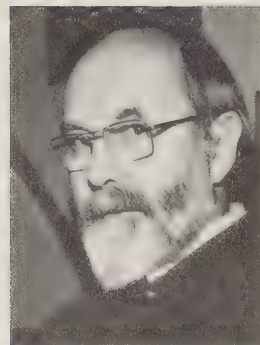


Photo by Steven Zane

St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church, New York City

KITSCH IN ART AND RITUAL

by Edward Robinson



Let me start with something familiar to us all: a Christmas card. We see a baby with curly hair and a winning smile, lying in a clean crib full of golden straw, surrounded by—but why go on? You can picture the rest.

Kitsch, the word now used for the sentimental degradation of religious truth, is not confined to Christmas. Our religion is infected with it throughout the year. It is not only to be found in pious bookshops and tourist stalls; our churches and chapels show ripe examples of this pseudo art, a genre that few will defend but that has been accepted as a natural feature of our religious life for so long that its removal may be bitterly resisted. In a curious way, its very badness can inspire a perverse loyalty and an affection deeper than any logic.

It is important to be aware of the threat that this sentimentality poses. Bad art leaves no room for good; nettles must be rooted out before roses can be planted. In the field of the visual arts, an awareness of this is slowly dawning. Few, however, seem alert to the insidious infiltration of kitsch into another area of our religious life—that of liturgy and ritual.

To understand the falsity of kitsch, it is

EDWARD ROBINSON is Director of the Religious Experience Research Unit of Manchester College, Oxford, England. With Brenda Lealman, he has co-authored a series, *Exploration into Experience*, published by the British Christian Education Movement. The series shows how the vision of the artist can open our eyes to a reality that is not to be defined but only suggested and responded to, in terms of mystery. Professor Robinson is also a wood sculptor with a special interest in the triptych.

essential to appreciate one important element in all true art: its invitation to us to exercise our freedom. Much of what claims to be art is trying to persuade us of something, to convince us of what is good or true, or alternatively, what is evil. Genuine art, though it originates from passionately held conviction, differs from propaganda. It does not reduce the individual's freedom to find his or her own interpretation of the truth.

True art invites a response. The painter, the poet, the liturgist not only appeal to us, they depend on us. "Two are needed for every art," said Ernst Barlach, "one who makes it and one who needs it." The work of art in its fullest sense is incomplete until it receives a response. Bridget Riley wrote, "Someone who practices as an artist makes a work but he does not make a work of art. This is done by others: a two-way act is needed.... Nobody can truthfully claim to possess a work of art, because each work has to find for itself those who respond to it, those who can see it, and those who belong to it."

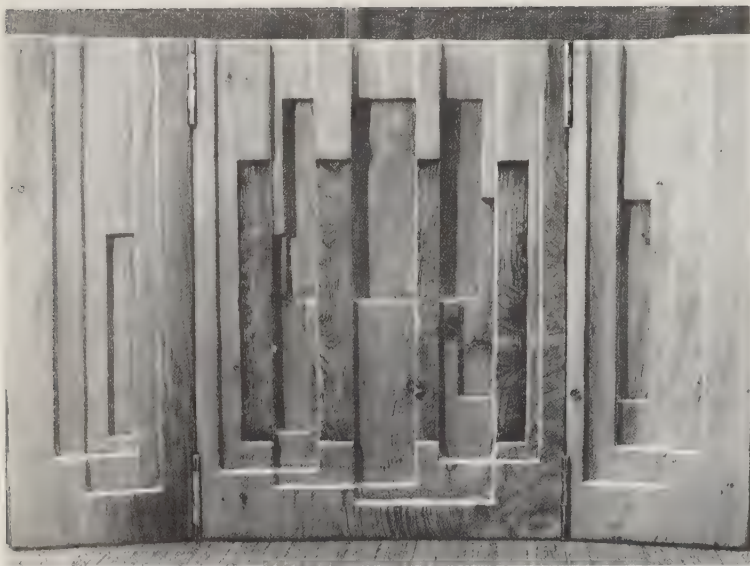
The trouble with that little Christmas card is that this two-way process is virtually eliminated. Such feeling as it expresses is second hand and conventional and invites no real encounter with the person who put it into this form. Why take the result so seriously? Because it is just one more symptom of a trivialization that threatens to take over more and more of our religious life.

This trivialization works in two ways. It offers a standardized, mass produced slug of feeling (or item of information) and reduces religious communication to the level of a television commercial. More serious than this, there is real dan-

ger of it weakening, through sheer atrophy, those spiritual muscles we need to strengthen if we are to be ready to respond to the demands and opportunities the "Creator Spiritus" may present.

"My purpose," said Kierkegaard, "is to make it more difficult for people to become Christians." He too was confronted by the complacent belief among churchmen that the gospel has only to be transmitted for its truth to be apparent to all. In urging the need for "appropriation," he called for a kind of communication in which every individual would be actively confronted with a mystery or riddle to which he or she must find a personal answer. That mystery had to be appropriated into one's very existence, and this could only be done at the cost of total engagement and strenuous effort of mind and spirit. Only then can it be said that a person is on the way to becoming a Christian. In this, of course, Kierkegaard could claim the authority of Christ himself, whose use of parables made a similar demand: Those that have ears to hear, let them hear.

There is one characteristic that all forms of kitsch have in common: a realistic style. Realism is the only mode of art that is tolerated by totalitarian regimes. Why? Because when a total loyalty is required, no opportunity must be given to the artist to offer an alternative vision of life. Reality must be conceived in terms the tyrant can control, so there are notable similarities in the "art" that Fascism and Marxism will tolerate. There are some curious ironies here. The hostility with which communist Russia treated Malevich's conception of "a world beyond objects" has only been matched by



Resurrection V. Triptych, elm. Edward Robinson, 1980. Coll. Mrs. Ruth Drake.

Photo by David Poppe

the general indifference of Western Christians to his pictures, which seem to them to be devoid of any religious significance

There have, of course, been great artists and writers who have worked in a realistic style; Rembrandt and Tolstoy are examples. But an art in which imitation replaces vision is ultimately boring, and this is because it fails to make that appeal to our freedom, which is the essential hallmark of all true art. The realistic novelist gives every detail of his heroine's complexion or her seduction, leaving nothing to the imagination. This egotism closes off all other options; the work is so full of its author that there is no room for us.

Abstract art is sometimes criticized for being so empty of content that "anything can be read into it." The artist is inviting people to read things into his work and does provide enough (but no more) for a sharing of experience to start. In contrast, the most damaging criticism of most realistic art is that it is so full of content that nothing whatever can be read into it. Another criticism of abstract art is that it is too difficult. All this means is that it requires some effort of attention and imagination from the viewer. A generation accustomed to an undemanding diet of easy realism finds this demand uncongenial.

The classic defense of kitsch is that, for all its faults, it is part of our religious cul-

ture; that in matters of personal piety, aesthetic standards are irrelevant; and that, if gaudy plaster saints and banal hymns help people say their prayers, what right has anyone to deprive them of these aids to devotion? And what about those Biblical warnings that tell us that the truth has been hidden from the great and wise ones of this world and is revealed to the foolish?

These arguments must be respected, but let us be clear what they are arguments for. Superficial or sentimental representations of spiritual realities are degrading not just because they satisfy the mind and heart with an inadequate or false image of the truth, but because they weaken our capacity for that imaginative response, that work of art by which we can learn to reach out for some higher and more testing vision. Art is a means of telling the truth. Bad art does not just fail to tell the truth, it substitutes a lie. It is this, and not its failure to satisfy the finer feelings of a cultivated mind, that makes it an enemy to worship.

What is true of art, poetry, and music is also true of ritual and the language of liturgy. There are dangers, it must be recognized, in regarding ritual as a form of art. It can, in the hands of a bad ritualist, become an end in itself. But then, so can art in the hands of a bad artist.

I have suggested that true art appeals to our sense of freedom. It may seem difficult to see how this can be true of ritual

It is surely highly conventionalized; it allows little or no scope for individual expression. Those who participate in it are bound by its formal structures. How, then, can it be said to demand, or even allow, a free response? I would like to insist that ritual, just as painting and poetry, can be a means of sharing an experience that makes possible a free growth of the spirit because of, not in spite of, the rules it obeys.

Consider a phrase commonly used in a dismissive sense: "an empty ritual." Perhaps this is an essential feature of all good ritual. Remember the egotism of the artist whose picture is so full of himself or herself that there is no room for us? Just as twentieth century art has recovered, in the abstract movement, something that should never have been missing from art, the trick of leaving space for the individual viewer to fill with his/her own experience, so ritual must always have a certain space, a certain silence if you like, behind or within the words that welcome all to enter and participate. There is this kind of generosity, in Bridget Riley's words, to "those who belong to it." In the language of Kierkegaard: ritual needs to be appropriated, filled with personal meaning by those who find its very formality the freedom they are seeking.

What does this tell us about the language proper to ritual? First, it will not be a language of direct communication, of the common exchange of information in the everyday world. This kind of language is too precise; it is the equivalent of that realism that admits only one interpretation and denies freedom. In other words, in the language of ritual, the surface meaning is unimportant. This does not mean a return to obscurity for its own sake. Rather, it means that words must seize and grasp, and challenge each participant to discover meanings that lie beneath the surface.

Second, the language of ritual will discourage out-and-out individualism and encourage the opposite. What may seem to set everyone free to move on centrifugal paths of personal reflection can, in fact, act as a focus, bringing together a great diversity of thought and feeling. Each individual will have a contribution, even though it may be unspoken. This is where art and ritual can be seen to have the most in common. The work of art not only offers a kind of confirmation of indi-

vidual experience, but it also can communicate an insight that transcends every particular feeling so that understanding of our lives is enhanced or found inadequate. The initial "yes" becomes "yes, I see." Ritual can do something similar. As each of us finds in a single poetic image some resonance with our own condition, something that touches on our immediate personal situation, the language of the rite can bring together in an unspoken unity individuals who at that moment become aware of having drawn insight from a common source

We sometimes hear today of the need to "bring theology into the marketplace." This curiously old-fashioned phrase does, in fact, apply only too well to some of the changes of ritual recommended today. The language of the supermarket and the information bureau provides a model for many modern forms of worship: the literary equivalent of loaves already sliced and fishes filleted into sticks: hygienic, instant-ready, tasteless kitsch. In some cases, the product is of such embarrassing banality that those who serve it feel bound to give some content and flavor by imposing their own personality. The ingratiating "togetherness" that is insinuated has become familiar to us all. It infringes still further upon the freedom of the individual to plumb real depth.

It may be that this is all part of the price we must pay for democracy. Market research will demonstrate what flavors



Mother and Child. Ernst Barlach, Staatliche Landesbildstette, Hamburg, Germany.

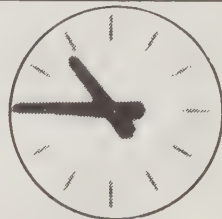
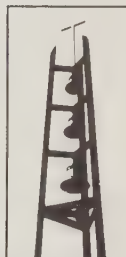
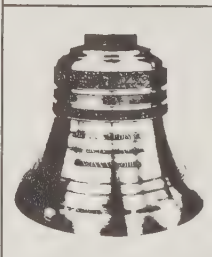
and what packaging appeal to what percentage of customers. If the choice of religious art and ritual is left to majority votes in any society, it is perhaps only to be expected that the preferred forms will be those that make the least demands on the understanding and imagination. However, this does not absolve those who are in a position to lead from doing just that. Sadly, however, it is the professional clergy who have been in favor of the Alternative Service Book while on the whole the laity have been against it

Above all, what we should contest is the openly declared ideal of reformers to make literal intelligibility of all forms of worship, forms that, by freeing the worshiper from any effort of the creative imagination, have become totally devoid of the power to evoke mystery. When the comfort of familiar phrases gives an effortless sense of belonging, then the language becomes kitsch. Comfort may indeed be one of the gifts of religion, but comfort cheaply won can easily become complacency. And if it is true, in William Temple's famous words, that the church is the only club that is run for the benefit of those who are not its members, what must outsiders think of a club that so consistently turns to the past for its literature, music and art? Such nostalgia can only encourage those who see religion as the opiate of the people.

The creative alternative is not for the church to turn its back on its own artistic inheritance, but to recognize that a tradition can only live by constant renewal. This is why for those who will look at what has been happening since the beginning of the century, there is still tremendous reason for hope. With the abandonment of the old conventions of narrative and naturalistic styles that dominated secular art up to the end of the century, enormous possibilities of freedom have been opened up for spiritual exploration and aspiration. The shattering impact of cubism that took place two whole generations ago has liberated energies and opportunities to which the church still gives only guarded recognition. Like caged birds faced with an open door, we are afraid of the prospect of freedom, but we have only to walk through the door to be free. Freedom is not just offered to us, it is required of us: that freedom of the imagination through which alone the creative Spirit can communicate.

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DENOMINATIONAL AWARDS COMPETITION: DISCIPLES OF CHRIST

Thirty-six architects and firms from across the nation and Puerto Rico entered a competition presented for the first time by the Board of Church Extension, an Indianapolis-based, international church planning and financing unit responsible for helping Christian churches plan and finance facilities to house their ministries.

The competition was established in honor of A. Frank Wickes, first Advisory

Architect for the Board of Church Extension of the Disciples of Christ. Awards were presented by Mrs. Blanche P. Wickes and Harold R. Watkins, President of Church Extension, during the Board's Centennial celebration at the General Assembly of the Christian Church held recently in San Antonio, Texas. Sixteen hundred people attended.

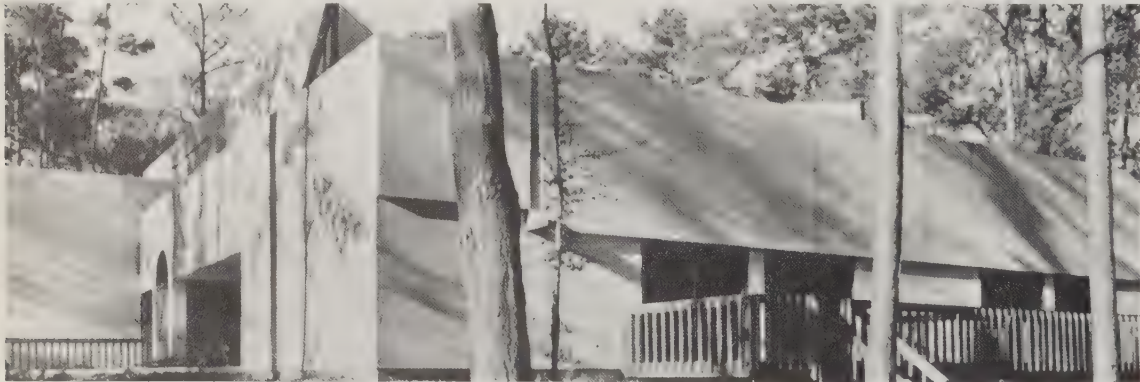
Judges for the competition included David O. Meeker, Jr., F.A.I.A., executive

vice president, American Institute of Architects, Washington, D.C.; Dr. Keith Watkins, Professor of Worship and Director of Advanced Professional Studies, Christian Theological Seminary, Indianapolis, Indiana; and Henry Jung, A.I.A., Philadelphia.

Jury consideration was given to excellence of design, architectural adaptation to experiment within the liturgy, faithfulness to budget and detail, and respect for historical preservation.

The Winners

Board of Church Extension of Disciples of Christ photos



Cyprus Creek Christian Church and Community Center, Spring, Texas. Clovis Heimsath, FAIA, Fayetteville, Texas.



Carmel Christian Church, Carmel, Indiana. Pecsok, Jelliffe and Randall, AIA, Indianapolis, Indiana.



Central Woodward Christian Church, Troy, Michigan. Jack K. Montiet, AIA, of Hoyem-Basso Associates, Inc., Troy, Michigan.



First Christian Church of Atlanta, Tucker, Georgia. Jova, Daniels, Busby Inc., Atlanta, Ga.



First Christian Church of Portsmouth, Ohio, exterior. Hayes, Wittenmyer, Tanner and Partners, Portsmouth, Ohio.



First Christian Church of Portsmouth, Ohio, interior. Hayes, Wittenmyer, Tanner and Partners, Portsmouth, Ohio.



National City Christian Church, Washington, D.C. Walton, Madden, Cooper, Inc., Landover, Maryland.

Design Competition Reflects Disciples' Architectural Progress

by Donald E. Mitchell

On a September morning in 1910, carpenters and craftsmen, members of East Side Christian Church in Long Beach, California, began construction of a new frame building on a completed foundation. Eight hours later, their new \$2,020 church structure had been completed and furnished, and dedication services were in process.

Such "church raisings" were not uncommon among Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ) as the denomination's rapid westward expansion took hold in the mid- and late-1800s. What was uncommon to these simple frontier structures was architectural consideration. Churches were often "designed" by a carpenter working with pencil and brown wrapping paper and dependent on the local lumberyard as the sole supplier of

materials.

Our Board of Church Extension came into being a century ago primarily as a provider of loans for church construction. Encouraging congregations to seriously consider the values of good architectural design began as early as 1888 when they were urged to "secure suitable plans prepared by competent architects."

A catalog listing more than 50 church buildings designed by eastern architects was offered by the Board Plans costing from \$2 to \$11 per set were available for frame structures as small as 16' x 22'. A 32' x 47' building complete with bell tower could be erected for less than \$2,500. An admonition encouraged congregations to "build houses convenient for the practical work of the day with tasty interiors and exteriors."

By 1923, both the Board of Church Extension and congregations were feeling the need for architecturally designed structures so keenly that A.

Frank Wickes, a Gary, Indiana architect, was brought to the staff. Wickes' architectural expressions coincided with a surge of enthusiasm by church members for more meaningful worship. He and others later added to the staff, served as advisors and urged congregations to hire architects to do their design work.

By 1969, the Architectural Department had done such a good job of educating congregations to the need for professionally designed facilities that the Department was phased out. Special architectural consultants are now retained throughout the country to advise congregations.

This progress of architectural literacy and sophistication moved staff and directors to launch a captive design competition this past year. Benefits anticipated in the planning stages and realized in retrospect have included

- The opportunity to expand the churches' architectural sensitivities by acknowledging and publicizing significant design accomplishments;
- Recognition and visibility for architects who, in harmony with congregation needs and resources, have produced outstanding results;
- Enhancement of the Board of Church Extension's position as an authoritative exponent of church design procedures that result in functional, economical and aesthetically pleasing structures to house ministry.

The decision has been made to continue this architectural competition as a way of helping free the Church to modify its traditional concepts of facility design.

Church Extension President Harold R. Watkins puts it this way, "Perhaps our architectural competition will further help us break the bonds of finances and tradition that keep us from designing contemporary spaces that are purposeful, simple, flexible, energy efficient, aesthetically pleasing and cost effective."

DONALD MITCHELL is Director of Public Relations of the Board of Church Extension of The Disciples of Christ



James K. Wittenmyer, AIA, accepts the A. Frank Wickes Architectural Award from Mrs. Blanche P. Wickes for "Outstanding Achievement" in his firm's design of First Christian Church, Portsmouth, Ohio. Looking on during recent award ceremonies in San Antonio, Texas, are Rev. Richard E. Wilburn (left), Minister of First Christian Church, and Harold R. Watkins (right), President of Board of Church Extension and sponsor of the nationwide architectural competition.

ARCHITECTURE: THREE IMPERATIVES

An Exhortation Based on a Rich Variety of Sources

by John M. Johansen, FAIA

Today some architects are reported as being so violently anti-modern as to be anti-architecture, as conventionally defined. Some architects are known to forego any responsibility for the performance of a service. Others are indicted for lack of scholasticism, for treating architecture as fashion, for revivals of historic styles whose symbols have long since lost meaning for us. In "Biblical" terms, "He who lives by the style, shall die by the style."

We should be equally critical of those architects who don't have the courage to accept and incorporate in their work our ever-advancing technology, seemingly unaware of the times in which we live. Others have little regard for humanistic values and cultural heritage. In the same way, we should be saddened by the alienation of many from nature.

Generally, there is a felt loss of direction and dedication that were so strong in the '50s, '60s, and '70s. Josep Lluís Sert spoke to me in the late '70s of a loss of faith; Moshe Safdie currently sees the need for a new professional ethic. With the present confusion, controversy, and chaotic pluralism, we might do well to search for the essential qualities, basic ingredients, and derivations for an archi-

tecture that can better perform its rightful service to the physical and psychic well being of our society. For, "without performing a service," said Lewis Mumford, "there can be no purpose, meaning, or value for architecture."

I have singled out three aspects of the human condition whose influences are so compelling that it seems appropriate to apply the term "imperative." They are the technological, the organic, and the psychosocial imperatives.

The Technological Imperative

By definition, technology represents "the practical and industrial arts, applied science." It has been the process of dealing with technical problems and the system by which society provides itself with those material things it needs and desires.

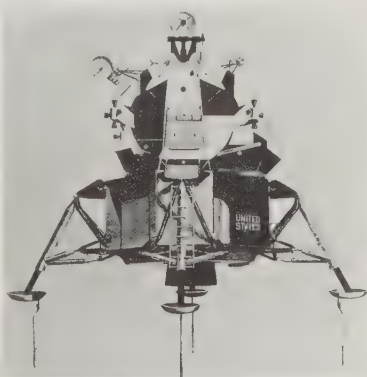
Whatever is true of technology in gen-

eral may be said to be true of building technology in particular. Architecture, by its very nature and through its performance in each period of history, has been inseparable from the building technology of that period. Whatever the building technique—be it Stonehenge, the Temple at Luxor, or the Parthenon in Greece; the Roman Baths, Romanesque Vézelay, or Gothic Chartres; the Renaissance dome of St. Peter's or the cast iron and glass of Paxton's Crystal Palace, architects have seized upon every technology available to them.

Structure has always been the essential ingredient of architecture. Its expressive and dynamic qualities are felt not only by those of professional interest, but also by lay people capable of nothing more than gut response.

Computers have made possible new structures heretofore incalculable. With prefabrication, we no longer construct buildings but assemble them from parts. We think in terms of systems: communication, surveillance, transport; systems superimposed upon other systems; systems within systems. Kinetic devices are offering to architecture possibilities for public service, and following the lead of kinetic sculpture, are enriching our architectural vocabulary.

But however rich this may all seem, building technology is still clearly behind in relation to other fields. Impatient architects and urban designers are borrowing from achievements in the automobile industry, marine and aviation design, theater and expo techniques, and from



Technological

JOHN M. JOHANSEN, FAIA, a designer of church buildings and schools, is a member of Johansen & Bhavnani, an architectural firm based in New York City. He has adapted this article for *Faith & Form* from the original, which appeared in the March 1984 *Architecture*, AIA Journal.

the field of electronics. Building, by taking on the role of monitoring performance and correcting decision-making, is adding a self-regulatory capacity found only in living organisms, an intelligence that is truly a new dimension for architecture today.

We can consider building technique as an extension of the human body and mind. Besides the operative role of technology, there is an inspirational spin-off, a romantic or poetic attitude, that "zeitgeist" or spirit of the times that satisfies part of our psychic needs. There is no doubt of the powerful impact, the persuasive imagery, the purity and directness of solution that lead us into technoaesthetics and fantasies of the future.

Architects today who look upon technology with disdain stand strangely apart from history. It is impossible to conceive of a society without it, or to develop in any period of architecture without it. Technology is the factor that undergoes constant change, prompts new discovery, invention, and improvement in the performance of art and architecture. Alvin Toffler, the futurist, sums it up: "Technology is the common heritage of the human race."

The Organic Imperative

The awareness that man is a part of nature is a conviction established in the life of primitive man, existent in the present, and inevitable for the future. The timeless experience of being sheltered against adverse elements by technical solutions throughout history and in spite of all superficial styling remains strongly with us.

We find awareness of this relatedness among the philosophers Rousseau, Thoreau, Walt Whitman, and de Chardin, among the architects Frank Lloyd Wright, Gaudi, Soleri, McHarg, among environmentalists, such as Commoner and the naturalists. The names are legion. Some architects have imitated natural form, i.e., biomorphics; some build solar houses, some look deeper into how nature organized herself. The word "organic" is defined as that which is made up of systematically interrelated parts. We speak of things being "organized"; surely this applies to architecture. Being part of nature we cannot but perform in nature's way; we examine nature from the microcosm of the macrocosm.

A recent movement concerned in-

volvement of the occupant in the design process and allowed him/her to be guided by natural principles such as circulation, movement, growth, and change as the organizing devices in the designs of buildings and cities. The root, branch, node, tissue, spine, and pod are now



Organic

commonly understood references in our profession. The essential connective tissue into which man and nature are woven is recognized and celebrated.

The Japanese metabolists found a relatedness to nature through Buddhist traditions, a sense of life's purpose, the "tao" or the way. The Archigram group spoke of "animative forces" determining design. A dimension even more deeply organic was revived by Louis Kahn, who spoke of buildings possessing an anima, a life principle or soul. He thought of them as capable of self-knowledge and power of will, which at a certain stage of its design would assume the authority to dictate just how it willed to be completed. Teilhard de Chardin, a deeply religious man, was seriously concerned about how man can follow God's intentions. The Teilhard Center in London has been established in his name, "dedicated to a civilization increasingly responsible for its own evolution." This is a stunning statement, for, up to now, nature has been exclusively in charge of evolution.

A significant recent book, *Regional Urbanisms*, by Peter Broberg, a Swedish architect, interprets Teilhard's principles. The regional landscape is described as a superhuman creature, the next stage in

our evolution. Urbanisms further are defined as organically planned regional centers that exhibit the behavioral principles found in all living creatures. Studies of the city henceforth may be called urban genetics.

The organic "ecological" world view of Eastern philosophies is, according to Capra, one of the main reasons for the immense popularity they have gained in the West. There appears to be a growing belief that the new physics, technology and social patterns may be brought together in some sort of organic unity. Our failure to feel our relatedness to nature in our lives and in our architecture cannot be forgiven as oversight, stupidity, or even arrogance; the indictment is even more severe. It is a denial of what connects this humanity to the greater cosmos of which we are all a part.

The Psychosocial Imperative

In this psychoanalytic age, we do not speak of aesthetic aspects of architecture as "delight," or that philosophy dealing with beauty and good taste. We have learned the more profound truth that the psyche is not simply a physically functioning entity, but that which has complex processes of its own that govern the total organism and its interactions with the environment.

Knowing this, the architect is obliged to develop an awareness of the meanings implicit in the manmade environment and the effect it exerts upon the occupants. The distinction that sets architecture apart from mere building is that in the process of serving human needs and events, it celebrates them as well. Whether these events are personal, familial, societal, professional, cultural, military, or religious, the architect, quite aside from keeping the rain off, is working through our current symbols to satisfy some psychic need. This need is in the self of the poet, artist, and architect, and through that self the architect satisfies the needs of his/her society as it acts out its myths.

In his book, *Myths to Live By*, Joseph Campbell makes these two central points that all mythologies of various cultures and times in history we now consider as one, and that even in our scientific age we are still living out and for ever will live out the mythologies of birth, quest, love, and death. Sir James Frazier and Sigmund Freud earlier believed that scientific truth would replace myths as

explanations of natural phenomena, because myths were regarded as primitive and superstitious. But both Carl Jung and Joseph Campbell agree that mythology will always be with us because it explains things about life that science cannot. As the philosopher Niels Bohr states, "they are separate truths which are different but compatible."

Myths tell us that the powers of the psyche are to be recognized and integrated into our lives. "Myths," says Campbell, "are the mental supports of rites; rites the physical enactment of myths." The formal rites of the church, diplomacy, the government, the corporation, and the family are all socially transmitted during one's formative years.

If this is so, then I wish to present as my central thesis that architecture has always been, is now, and forever will be the setting for the enactment of these rites. The urban centers and buildings serve not only as shelters, but also "theaters." Our public squares, city gates, inaugural platforms, shrines, churches, corporate headquarters, and most particularly, houses are all, in a sense, theaters.

In ancient Greece, the word "persona" meant mask (per) through which sounds of the voices (sona) were transmitted to the public. In the psychoanalytic field, "persona" means those images of ourselves we wish others to know us by. It takes the form of manner, dress, social memberships, possessions, and the buildings we occupy. The mask then may be held up not only to the face but also to the building representing us, and thus explain and validate the "facade" on the exterior and the "period room" on the interior, as well as ornamentations of doorways and rooftops. However, a serious distinction must be made between the true self and the contrived self; a healthy balance must be reached between escapism and hard fact. Architecture is that art, which in its finest performance brings this balance between the two; if not in each individual building, then in the collective building performance of any one time.

It should be noted that the persona, or contrived image, is a mark of insecure identity, whether it is in the adolescent person, adolescent institution, or nation. Psychiatrists agree that as we become adults we develop a greater self knowledge, a finding of identity in which process one is less dependent upon the per-

sona. We may conclude, then, that buildings representing mature people or institutions would be more direct statements of what the individual or corporate occupant truly is. When our concern is for architecture, it is important to make the distinction between personal introvert symbols and those that have meaning to society and all mankind. There is some doubt in our profession as to whether the images used by the so-called Postmodernists are accessible to the public at all. "The true symbol," says Thomas Merton, "does not merely point to something else. It contains in itself a structure which awakens our consciousness to a new awareness of the inner meaning of life and reality itself. In the presence of true symbols, one is coming into contact with one's deeper self and with that deeper self in others."



Psycho-Social ("The Ancient of Days," a vision seen by William Blake).

In architecture, then, we cannot simply deal with the personal, but must seek deeper into meaning and communicate meaning to the public. Joseph Campbell reminds us that there must be a "cleansing of the windows of perception to the wonders, at once terrible and fascinating

of ourselves and the universe of which we are the ears, eyes and mind." Architecture of any serious intent has always drawn from deep psychic roots and has been able to communicate with a large public.

Let the Postmodern architects be reminded that no one, much less architects, can create symbols, for they have taken many centuries to develop. All they can do is recognize, understand, possibly restate in current terms, and use appropriately, for symbols live only as people believe in them. Over a period of time updated expressions of symbols may become compelling while others no longer speak to us.

The most important characteristic of architecture is not that of decoration but of form and space. It should therefore be no surprise that the great primordial experiences have always been spatial and that the most vivid of these have always been expressed in architectural terms. I. E. Cirlot, in his *Dictionary of Symbols*, describes some of these fundamental images: The *cave*, which represents a return to the prenatal state and one's forthcoming as an experience of rebirth, the *house*, feminine, the repository of wisdom with interior rooms and passages representing various levels of the psyche, the *forest* of trees or columns and megastructures of today suggest the nature of life into the unknown, the *labyrinth* in which we grope our way, unaware of the consequences of our decisions, in ignorance of the laws of the cosmos, the *tower*, representing aspiration above the common level of achievement seen today in the corporate skyscraper, the *rocket*, an escape from the earthly to greater realms of the universe in search of the divine.

The implications of the psyche for architecture are far too important to be neglected in favor of personal indulgences, esoteric references, and the meaningless decoration appearing about us. We would do well to be guided by great minds such as Jung, Campbell, Merton, and others who understand the workings of the psyche and learn from them how to teach us to deal with space and form as they relate to the psychosocial needs of our time.

What I offer in these three imperatives is a philosophic base, a moral support, an awareness of broader choice of derivations from which we may feel free to draw.

A MODERN CHRISTIAN ARCHIVES

by David Ramsey



Some years ago, as a young art instructor in a major American city, I decided to take my classes on a tour of the city's churches. I wanted my students to experience each of the great styles in the history of Christian religious architecture. There were scores of churches to choose from, so I decided to visit the offices of the Catholic archdiocese and look at the architects' drawings. They weren't there.

Several weeks later I was notified that I might find them at a local seminary. After a long drive—and endless hallways—I was led up a flight of stairs to an open tower. There were the drawings—hundreds of them—heaped in a corner, all but ruined by sun and rain and covered with pigeon droppings.

It has taken years for that experience to translate itself into the Archives of Modern Christian Art. Meanwhile, there were other reminders: the abandoned colonial churches of rural Mexico, the death of Maurice Lavanoux and the Liturgical Arts Society, research for a doctoral dissertation on The Visual Arts in Catholic Higher Education, and service on three diocesan liturgical commissions.

I cannot say what finally triggered the idea for the Archives, but apparently its time had come. Only a week after I first mentioned it to our college president in November 1980, I was sent to a Washington conference on sacred art. There I met Mary B. Lucey, IFRAA director at large, and Judy Miller, then executive director. Since that time, the association with IFRAA has

been totally supportive, and for this I am continually grateful.

Recent reports in the American press refer to the 1980s as America's golden age of church building, with construction and decoration of new churches at a record 1.6 billion dollars a year and rising. As encouraging as this may sound, however, churches are being closed or demolished almost as fast as others are built in the United States. An entire Detroit neighborhood containing 16 churches of various denominations was razed in the fall of 1981 to make room for a new industrial complex. In Chicago, Boston, and San Francisco, Catholic bishops have been criticized severely for disposing of old churches without sufficient regard for their artistic or cultural value. In England, a high church advisory board has predicted the closing of 600 parish churches by 1990. In Latin America, the preservation of the magnificent and little-known religious art and architecture of colonial times has been a losing battle for years. Many modern nations have kept no inventory of their religious treasures, and much has been lost to vandals, thieves, and the elements.

In 1972, John Dillenberger, first president of the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, Calif., wrote

This situation calls for the necessity and urgency of mutual collaborative research from the side of art and church historians. Otherwise the works of art will themselves continue in neglect with further physical deterioration. If that should continue the simple data will be so partial that the lack of evidence will forever destroy the possibility of an accurate picture of our heritage.

In response to repeated statements of this kind by a cross-section of Protestant and Catholic leaders from the fields of Religion and the Arts in America, College of Notre Dame in Belmont, Calif., decided in the spring of 1981 to explore the formation of a special research collection that would document the development of Christian religious painting, sculpture, architecture, and crafts in the modern world. The collection would begin where the Princeton Index of Christian Art ends—at 1400 A.D.—and would contain books, periodicals, printed pictures, slides, motion pictures, video tapes, exhibition catalogs, and other ephemera, recordings of oral history and unpublished items such as journals, lecture notes, etc., which record the sacred art of all Christian denominations since the 15th century.

Responsibility for organizing the project was placed in the hands of Dr. David Ramsey, chairman of the College Art Department and an authority on contemporary ecclesiastical art. During the spring and summer of 1981, consulta-

DAVID RAMSEY is the director of the new Archives of Modern Christian Art at the College of Notre Dame, Belmont, Calif.

tions were held with ranking representatives of the following organizations: The Index of Christian Art, Yale Divinity School, The Hartford Seminary, The Graduate Theological Union (Berkeley), the Archives of American Art, the Council on Library Resources, Religious Communities for the Arts, Friends of Art and Religion in America, the Archives of St John's Abbey, the Bishop's Committee on the Liturgy, the National Catholic Education Association, and the Interfaith Forum on Religion, Art and Architecture.

The consultants were in unanimous agreement that the establishment of a research center for modern Christian art is essential to the advancement of scholarship in this neglected field. Several noted that the concept of such a research collection was implicit in the recommendation of the Second Vatican Council that schools for the study of sacred art be established. Eloise Spaeth, who chairs the Board of the Archives of American Art wrote, "The idea is sound and someone should have been doing it long ago." Archbishop Rembert Weakland, OSB, of Milwaukee observed, "The Church, as patron of the arts, could only benefit from encouragement of such a project." Dr. John Cook, professor of Religion and Art at Yale Divinity School added, "...the need for such a resource is indeed pressing," and Jane Dillenberger noted that she had "long wondered about the continuation of the Princeton Index of Christian Art into our own day."

In February 1982, the Boards of Governance of College of Notre Dame voted unanimously to give full recognition to the Archives of Modern Christian Art and to make it eligible to participate in college funding. In October the Archives received a \$10,000 grant from Trust Funds Incorporated of San Francisco to begin its work. Mr. Albert Steiss, president of the Foundation, wrote, "It is our hope that this modest grant will attract support from the National Endowment and other sources that have an interest in this field."

The grant has enabled the Archives to employ Carol Garcia, recently awarded an M.A.R. in Religion and the Visual Arts from Yale Divinity School, as part-time administrative assistant, and to undertake two of its initial projects: the



Archives of Modern Christian Art

duplication of the IFRAA slide collection and the development of a union catalog. Thanks to the diligent help of Sally Ewin, the IFRAA duplicates have arrived safely at the Archives and are now being prepared for use. The Union Catalog project is also underway according to the following description, which is taken from the grant application:

Since no comprehensive research collection on modern Christian art has been attempted before, these materials are very difficult of access and there is no adequate idea of their true extent. In order to identify and locate them, the Archives will circulate a questionnaire to key people in 1000 church-related colleges, universities, seminaries, theological schools, religious houses of study, art libraries and special associations to inquire into the scope and nature of their collections in this area. This will establish the necessary framework for the Archives collection and will also bring to light special collections of original documents and papers. Consultant for this project is Brother Ryan Perkins, OSB, Assistant Archivist of St John's Abbey, Collegeville, Minnesota. Members will receive a copy of the survey report and subsequent catalog.

After completion of this project, the Archives will undertake to assemble a collection of ephemeral materials that

exist in abundance and that contain a rich and extensive record of the art and architecture of American Christian churches that have been built or remodeled in the past two hundred years. These materials take the form of commemorative publications issued on the occasion of anniversaries, centennials, visits by church dignitaries, rebuilding or renovation, etc. They often contain photos and other artistic information including names of architects, craftsmen, designers and, at times, a statement of principles that have guided design of the church or chapel in question. Many major churches also publish tourist guides to their treasures.

It is also a matter of record that there have been many conferences, workshops, exhibits, and lectures over the years that have not received coverage in the public media. Participants in these events often retain mimeographed materials, exhibition catalogs, etc. for various reasons. The Archives will solicit gifts of all such ephemera via a systematic survey of religious congregations and parishes as well as individuals in the field of Christian Art.

All creative people have their own archives and, sooner or later, need a

safe place to put them. It has been suggested that this may turn out to be one of the richest sources of many priceless materials that have been overlooked or ignored by the "official" Church. Two such collections already have been given to the Archives, and three others have been promised, including several unpublished manuscripts.

Both the Union Catalog and the Ephemera Collection are expected to be very cost-effective projects, with high yield for relatively small investment. But cataloging these materials will be an enormous task. In fact, only a few years ago the organization of such a vast and complex collection, using traditional methods, would have been so difficult and costly as to discourage all attempts; today, however, with the advent of computerized cataloging, the prospect has become entirely feasible.

While the Archives' collections are relatively small, steps are being taken to set up a catalog that is sophisticated enough to respond to a broad spectrum of uses for the materials. This process involves two stages: (1) preliminary preparation of a computer-ready catalog incorporating elements of those classification systems in common use that are most compatible with the content and goals of the Archives, and (2) selection and acquisition of hardware and transfer of the catalog into electronic form. Part One—the "pencil and paper" phase of this project—is underway, guided by College of Notre Dame librarians in consultation with several nationally recognized authorities at the University of California at Berkeley and at Stanford University. Part Two awaits funding. Eventually, the data base created by this project ought to be accessible, via existing networks, to other research libraries.

Other Archives' projects will have to wait until firm foundations have been laid, but they will not be forgotten. One of these involves videotaped interviews with living artists and architects, as they discuss their religious works. Viewers will visually "walk through" modern churches, and "around" modern sculpture while hearing the artist's own interpretation of the symbolism, or perhaps a dialog between architect and patron regarding problems that were resolved, approaches that failed, reactions of the

worshipping community, etc. In this project the Archives' hopes for assistance from existing TV facilities across the country. In the words of Bishop Pierre Dumaine of San Jose, California, chairman of the Catholic Communications Campaign, "I especially encourage you in your plans to develop projects with the Catholic Television Network, since the visual education of our people is so necessary today."

Like the infant that it is, the Archives has been accepting all the nourishment it can get in the form of acquisitions, but not with reckless abandon! While there are, at present, almost as many items dealing with Bavarian Baroque or Reformation iconography as there are those on New Mexican Santos or New England Meeting Houses, there are also certain priorities that come into play when choices must be made. Thus, as a rule, the Archives give highest priority to the most "immediate" items, i.e., 20th century U.S. first, then 20th century Latin America and Canada, with 20th century Europe, etc., following. This same sequence is used for the 19th century, then the 18th and so forth. This arrangement gives priority to the Americans and to the more recent works (which, ironically, often turn out to be the most threatened!) while leaving the older, more thoroughly studied monuments for last. It may not always work this way since gifts are exempt from the rule, but the American location of the Archives and its time frame seem to have conspired to focus especially on Christianity in the New World—a happy coincidence indeed!

At the present time the Archives is expanding into larger quarters in the new College of Notre Dame Library (Pictures will appear in a later issue of *Faith and Form*). The College is one of the oldest in California and enjoys an enviable location on a pleasant wooded campus just a few miles south of the San Francisco International Airport.

The current Archives collection consists of approximately 1,000 volumes, 10,000 slides, and various vertical files containing exhibition catalogs, printed reproductions, and other ephemera. There are complete sets of *Liturgical Arts Quarterly* and *Good Work*, and partial sets of *Faith and Form*, *Kunst und Kirche*, *Das Münster*, *Arte Christiana*, *L'Art Sacré*

and *L'Art d'Alaise*, as well as newsletters from several currently active Christian art organizations. The oldest book in the collection is a pictorial life of St. Philip of Jesus published in Mexico City in 1801. Its iconography is a "new world" in itself. Among the newest items is an outstanding research paper with superb original color photos of Maybeck's Christian Science Church in Berkeley, Calif. It was produced for a course on The History of Christian Art offered at the College last spring.

In no sense is the Archives merely a warehouse. Archives are places where documentary evidence can be found. Unlike libraries, which are mainly places where books are kept, archives have a special responsibility to and for the materials they contain: a "tribunal of last resort," so to speak. Their authority depends on the originality of certain documents and on the completeness of the collection. Since, in art and architecture, the ultimate documents are the works themselves, research collections (other than museums) must deal with them at second hand. It is here that *completeness* becomes a criterion of authority. The primary goal of the Archives of Modern Christian Art is the *complete* and orderly preservation of the record of achievement in sacred art by all Christian denominations since the Renaissance. Of course, it is impossible to put a deadline on such a goal, so it may be some time before the Archives becomes the center it is destined to be. While the College of Notre Dame is deeply committed to this work, it can not proceed alone and looks to others of like mind for assistance and support.

Meanwhile, by its very presence and its activities, the Archives can raise public consciousness to the importance of this very neglected field. By inviting and facilitating use of its collections, the Archives will provide leadership for serious study of living Christian art on a continuing basis. By developing the first computerized data base on modern Christian art, the Archives will greatly expand opportunities for scholarly research. Without such a resource, the Christian art produced in studios and workshops throughout the land may gradually lose touch with its own magnificent tradition and may become, indeed, a voice crying in the wilderness.

ACOUSTICS REASSESSED: AN OPPORTUNITY

by Charles N. Clutz



Does your church still have felt and burlap?

Acoustics for synagogues and churches has always been a "hot topic" for discussion among architects, musicians, acousticians, and the worshipper. The length of reverberation time and the way that sound is distributed in a space tend to be the primary issue. Most liturgical music was composed for a fairly long reverberation period—at least two seconds at mid-frequencies and up. (Plainsong sounds great at five seconds, dull at one second.) However, speech with good intelligibility is difficult to achieve in a space with a long reverberation time and it is usually necessary to amplify it at low volume levels in various locations throughout the building.

During the summer of 1982 at All Saints Parish in Brookline, Mass., a renovation affecting the acoustics was undertaken. The building is an early (1895) design by architects Ralph Adams Cram and Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue in Perpendicular Gothic. Goodhue's exquisite pen and ink sketches of the building are well-known, although the tower, cloister

and side porch remain unbuilt. The choir and left chapel were completed in 1926 to designs by Cram and Ferguson. Of large proportions, the nave and choir measure 148 feet in length by 58 feet in height. At the side chapels flanking the front of the nave, the building widens to 77 feet where the ceiling height is 32 feet. The volume totals 380,000 cubic

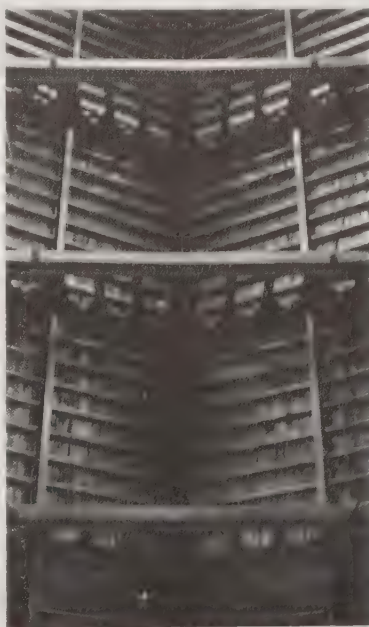
feet of space.

The acoustics at All Saints Church appear to have been controversial from the opening of the building. The first organist noted in his "Historical Sketch" dated 1914 the following:

When the stone church was opened we found the acoustics bad. There was a disagreeable echo and many people complained that they could not hear well. We strung wires across to no purpose, but when the hangings were put up on the rear wall, there was a great improvement.

Lay people frequently confuse the terms "echo" and "reverberation." Echoes are reflected sounds that can be distinctly heard apart from the natural reverberation. Reverberation is the persistence of sound in a space after the cessation of the original sound source. It is due to multiple reflections from the ceiling and walls, arriving at different times to the listener and can be calculated and measured electronically.

The Vestry minutes of April 10, 1922, note that a John Manville representative was "present by request and explained the manner in which the acoustics of the church could be improved." The Vestry accepted the proposal to cover the then-existing seven bays of the nave and the right aisle chapel with three inches of felt covered with burlap. The work was done in such a manner that the 2 x 8 rafters remained exposed. The use of felt and



View of tie-beam roof, All Saints Parish, Brookline, Mass. Cram, Goodhue and Ferguson, Architects

CHARLES N. CLUTZ is a registered architect living in Boston, Massachusetts. After graduation from the University of Kansas with degrees in architecture and music, he worked for the Aeolian-Skinner Organ Company. Subsequently, he returned to the practice of architecture and is presently employed at Moritz Bergmeyer Associates. Clutz is a student of Bertram G. Goodhue's career.

burlap to reduce reverberation time was developed by Wallace Clement Sabine, dean of the Post-Graduate School of Applied Science at Harvard University, and documented in his collected papers and private consulting papers housed there

When I first came to the parish in 1965, my listening experience in the nave was a muffled musical sound with less than adequate congregational participation. The longitudinal section clearly shows why. Most of the sound heard in the nave was direct with little reflected sound. The felt and burlap detail effectively absorbs fifty percent at 124 Hz per Sabine's studies, a greater percentage at higher frequencies. The choir and organ always have sounded excellent in the chancel due to reflective surfaces there causing minimal absorption. Out in the nave people could hear sermons and lessons well over the sound amplification system, but the choir sounded distant due to lack of reflected sound from the nave ceiling. The nave arcade and side chapels break up and disperse sound that might be reflected back. The pews have two-inch

cushions covered with velour and there is no carpeting. Acoustically, the congregation heard only those gathered immediately around them. With 200 people present for worship, to the individual it sounded like four—hardly desirable for maximum participation

Concerns expressed by the music director, two other architects in the parish, and myself led to a series of discussions in the music committee during 1968. Studies were done, particularly by one of the architects taking Bob Newman's acoustics course at M.I.T. After a six-week trial use of a temporary nave altar during Lent, a permanent nave altar and railing were installed with a re-seating of the pews. The design was by Hoyle, Doyle and Berry for the 75th anniversary of the parish. Although this did not improve the acoustics *per se*, it succeeded in moving the action and spoken word into the nave by a distance of 58 feet

Due to continuing dissatisfaction among parish musicians, the vestry authorized studies in the fall of 1981 by a heating engineer to determine the cost implications, in terms of increased oil consumption for the removal of the felt and burlap (about 1,000 gallons more annually). Felt, in addition to absorbing sound, also acts as a thermal barrier against heat loss. Projections for adding rigid insulation to the roof when that is re-done in the future indicated that about 320 gallons would be saved annually. Since the heating engineer's report indicated that the fuel bills would not rise dramatically (recent experience has shown them to average about \$20,000 annually), it was decided to remove the felt and burlap. It should also be mentioned that the burlap was beginning to disintegrate and fall down in small pieces along with pieces of felt. In many places, the burlap was blackened from the years of burning coal

As an added precaution, a structural engineer was retained to evaluate the existing structure in terms of its compliance with the 1980 Massachusetts Building Code for possible addition of rigid insulation to the roof and the snow loading that might result. Research had to be done at the Boston Public Library's Print Department, which houses the Cram and Ferguson collection of working drawings and supple-



Bertram Goodhue drawing of All Saints Parish.

mental detail drawings in order to come up with critical information for the structural engineer to complete his calculations

During August 1982, the pews and nave altar were cleared out of the way and a moving scaffolding with outriggers was installed to remove 5,600 square feet of felt and burlap from the nave, right chapel, and side aisles. The process took about 5 weeks and proved to be even messier than anticipated due to the accumulation of soot and dust. The felts had been nailed at approximately six inches on center in both directions, which meant that more time was required to remove them than had been planned. Small pieces that were tested proved to be quite flammable. It should be noted that this work was done before the current laws regarding flame spread ratings for materials

What has resulted from the exposure of a hard ceiling? The congregation can hear the choir over a greater dynamic range: pianissimos can now be sung and be heard and fortissimos do not sound like double fortes. This has stimu-



View down length of nave, All Saints Parish.

Photo by Charles N. Clutz

lated a greater congregational participation in the singing of hymns and responses, although the length of the building makes it difficult for people to "stay together," acoustically speaking. Perhaps this was the "echo" referred to by the first organist of the parish when the building opened in 1899. In truth, the congregation did not stay together previously, but they were unaware of this due to the sound absorption by felt.

I have discovered as a substitute organist that "less organ" can be used for congregational singing than previously. Sparing use has to be made of the 32-foot stops, which tend to "muddy" the sound. When reeds and mixtures are added, playing often has to be non-legato with special emphasis on the harmonic rhythm through the use of an agogic accent (accent of timing). This is necessary because of the volume and dynamic range of the organ. As a solo instrument, the organ is far more effective than previously—the longer reverberation time enhances the sound, which composers such as Buxtehude, Bach, Franck, and Vienne intended.

Speaking in this building is problematical, however. The existing column loudspeakers, installed prior to the felt removal, tend to excite the space at loud levels with the result that the phrases overlap. One has to speak slowly and enunciate words carefully. (I have found personally that it is better not to use the amplification system at all.) Undoubtedly, the system will have to be re-done to include many low-volume level speakers with a time delay feature that corresponds to the natural reverberation of the room.

Would the parish do it again? I hope so, for the benefits reaped far outweigh any problems that exist as a result. Bach's "B Minor Mass" was sung by the Boston Cecilia, accompanied by a baroque orchestra, in the church last December. They were positioned at the font and the sound was glorious.

All Saints is not the only building with a ceiling absorbing vital sound. The felt and burlap detail was a standard used by many architects in the first decades of this century. Architects, church musicians, and parish liturgy committees should seriously investigate the hardening of ceiling surfaces to revitalize their corporate worship.

Practically Speaking

by Herman Hassinger, FAIA



Mies Van der Rohe had a favorite expression, "God is in the details." He was telling us that good architecture is more than grandiose concepts. It's also the collective sum of hundreds of details that make up any project. Rather than creating architecture from the top down, the architecture of effect, we should strive to create from the bottom up and have architecture of purpose.

This is my attempt to share this purpose with all those who labor with the daily details.

Velcro, A Wonder Material of the 20th Century

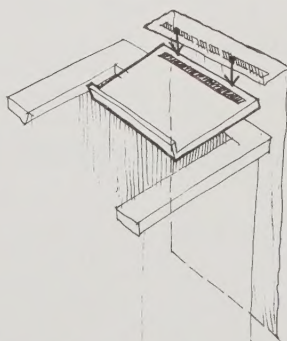
As architects, we work with many materials. The traditional ones, such as wood, stone, and brick are part of our heritage. Even our "new" materials, Glue-Lams, steel, and concrete are only improvements on their original versions. Sometimes we get a material that has no precedent. Velcro is such a material. We're all familiar with it in our clothing and sportswear. Have you ever thought of it as a resource for church design?

I'm not suggesting that Velcro is the basis of a major architectural breakthrough, but it does have uses where things need to be semi-permanently positioned and then later taken down or moved. Fabrics, panels, artifacts can all be hung, positioned, fastened, or whatever with this stuff.

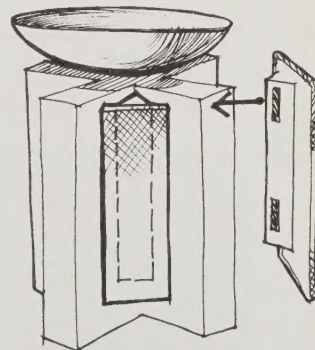
The basic element is the hook side (patterned after a cocklebur) and the pile side, which is grabbed by the opposite element.

Its uses for small details and fastenings are limitless. Most of them are associated with the positioning of fabrics and soft goods. Some of the uses should be obvious, but some may not be. It's useable as a latching device in hardware and casegoods; these non-fabric applications are more unusual but eminently practical. The drawings illustrate several applications I've used successfully. I hope they set your imagination going.

Continued on page 36



Pulpit frontal—set hook strip into a routed groove on top of the book rest. Be sure to stop groove short of the edge.

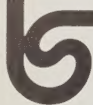


Baptismal font with attached fabric panels in changeable liturgical colors.

HERMAN HASSINGER, FAIA, is a practicing architect in Moorestown, N.J. He has completed over eighty church commissions and received twenty AIA Design Awards, including seven awards from IFRAA.



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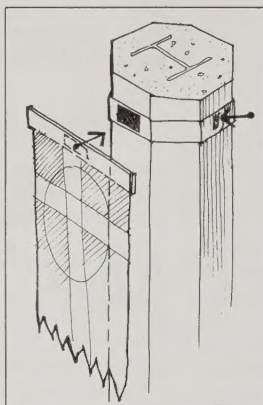
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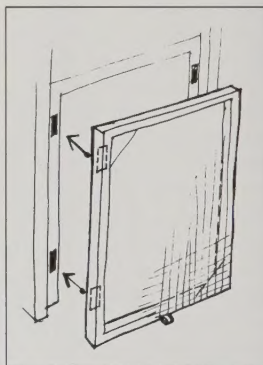
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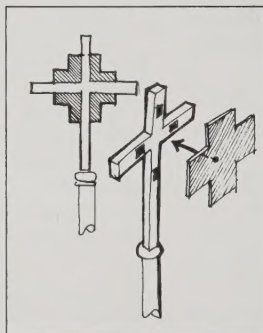
Practically Speaking Continued from page 35



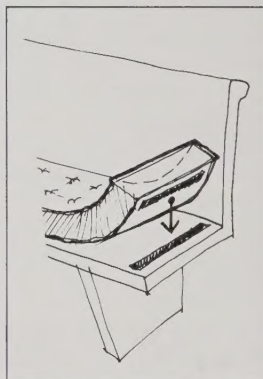
A Velcro collar, which could be in a decorative color, is put around a nave column. It can then become the basis for a banner attachment system. Banners and Velcro have possibilities limited only by the designer's imagination.



Grille cloth screens for speakers, organ chambers, and other access panels can be detailed with Velcro to eliminate hinges, latches, and hardware. Be sure to include a pull tab or finger hole to make panel removal possible.



Processional cross with changeable color board. This changeable element can be painted, enameled, or fabric covered.



Pew cushions and kneelers can always use a hold-down device. While this is a most obvious use, it is often overlooked.

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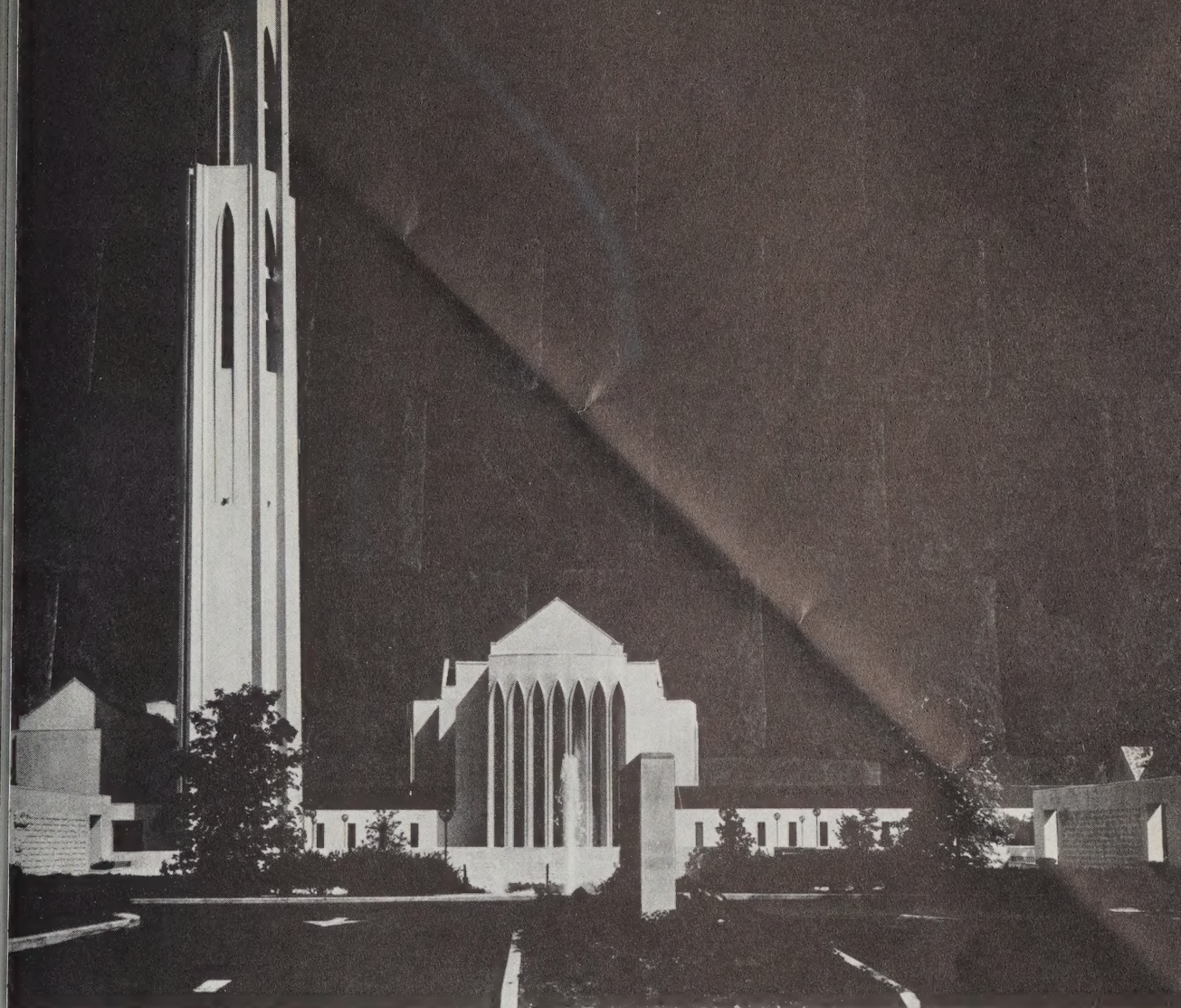
Now a word of caution. Velcro is capable of being engineered for load. The manufacturer can provide engineering data if the use is suitably sophisticated.

As a rule of thumb, use it sparingly and add more only if it's needed.

I once designed a flexible seating chair (still in production) with a ganging device consisting of two inconspicuous pads of Velcro on the chair legs. It worked fine with only one hitch. If any woman brushed against the hook pad, it grabbed her stockings and absolutely ruined them. Needless to say, I was chagrined, and the Velcro feature was quickly dropped from the chair by the manufacturer.

Most sewing shops, specialty stores, marine supply stores have small kits available for experiment. Try some and see if you can come up with an unusual application.

The manufacturer, Velcro USA, Inc., can be helpful in providing technical data and details: Velcro USA, Inc., 406 Brown Ave, PO Box 5218, Manchester, NH 03108, (603) 669-4892.



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